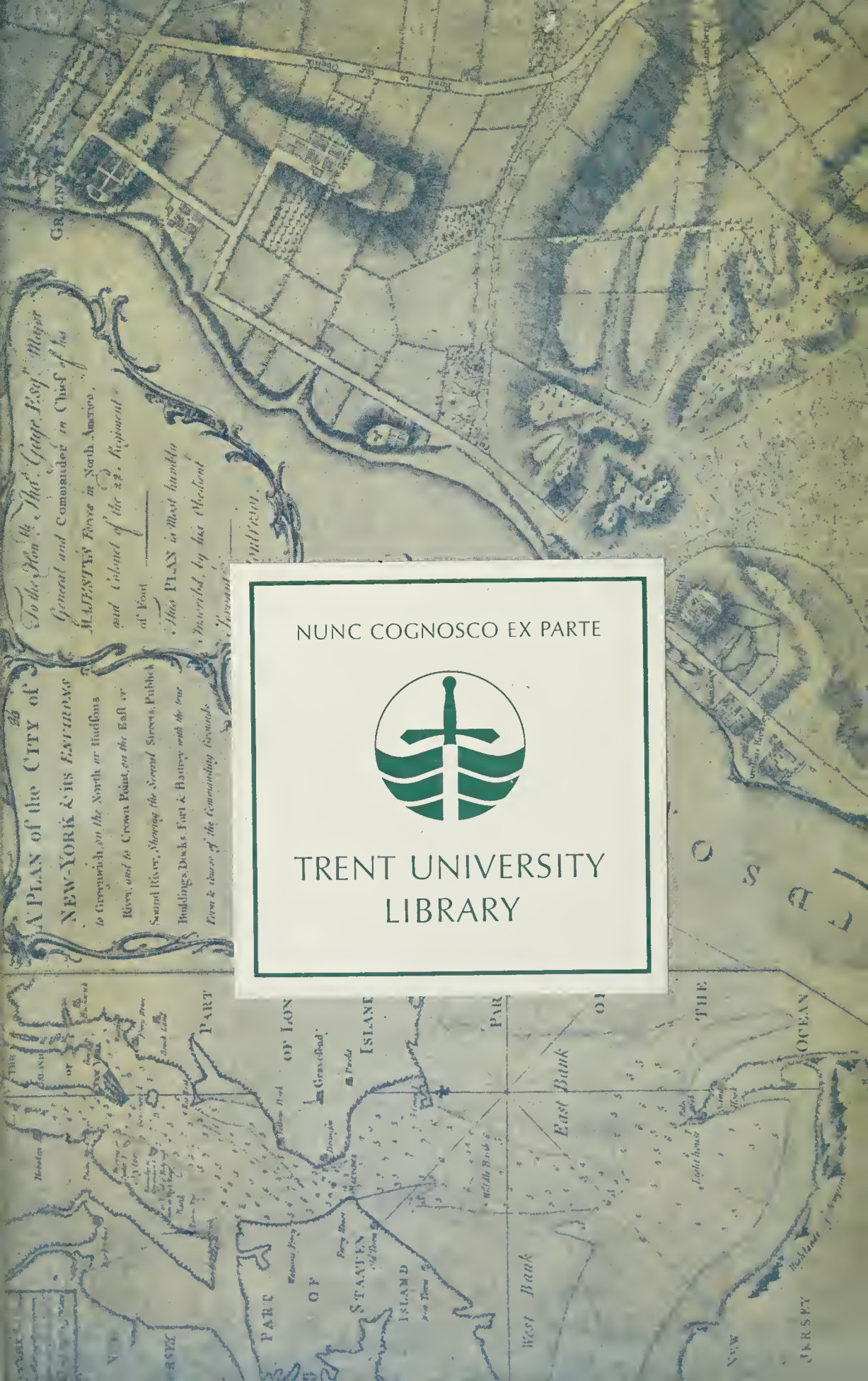
A PLAN of the City of
NEW-YORK & its Environs
To the Hon.ble Thos. Gage Esq.r Major
General and Commander in Chief of the
MAJESTIES Forces in North America,
and Colonel of the 22.d Regiment
of Foot
This PLAN is most humbly
Inscribed, by his Most
Humble
Sworn
Soundings
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References.

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NEW YORK IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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The "Atlantic Neptune" View of New York from the Northwest, Before 1773.

From the rare impression of the drawing by Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres, by courtesy of R. T. H. Halsey, Esq.

NEW YORK
IN THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By

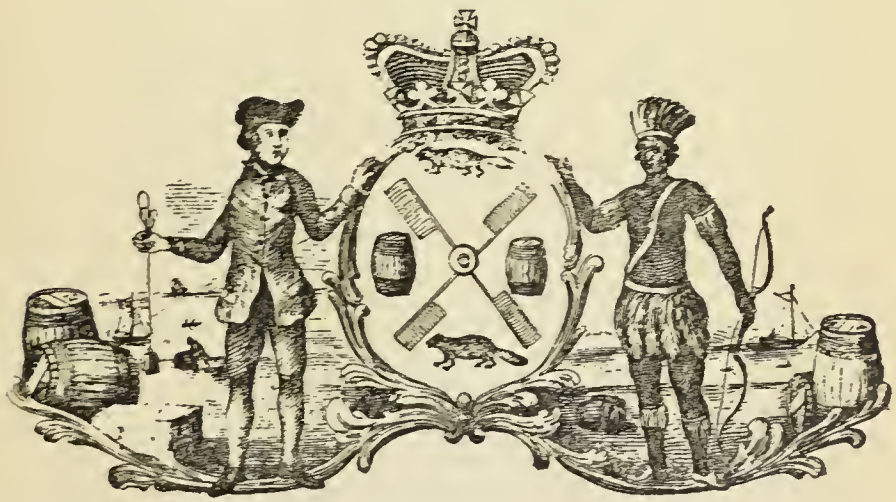
Wilbur C. Abbott

Professor of History, Harvard University

Illustrations Selected by

Victor H. Paltsits

Chief of American History Division, New York Public Library



CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK · LONDON

1929

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Printed in the United States of America

PREFACE

The share of New York in the American Revolution was, though not one of the chief causes, at least one of the determining factors of that movement, especially in the formation of the government which arose from it. Moreover as the centre, even the scene, of some of the great military operations of the war, and as the headquarters of the British activities during a great part of the period of hostilities, New York City occupies a place of importance in the annals of that struggle. Especially in view of the later development of the city this page of its earlier history has a peculiar interest. Nor is that interest merely local, for there are few such opportunities to observe the antecedents, the circumstances and the results of a revolutionary movement as is afforded by the events here recorded.

Such a study seems the more worth while in that, though many parts of this movement in New York have been the subject of minute investigation, and made the subject of learned monographs, and the whole has been sketched in the general histories of the city, the various streams of historical contribution have not hitherto been combined into a single narrative. This is not, indeed, the first volume which has appeared under very nearly the same title. As early as 1784 Judge Jones was writing in London his *History of New York during the Revolution,* published in New York nearly a century later, a book which has now risen to the rank of an

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"original authority." In 1881 the Mercantile Library Association of New York City published a collection of contributions to the subject under the same title, with an admirable introduction from the pen of a scholar who did so much for the history of the city, Mr. Henry B. Dawson. To both of these works the author of the following pages is greatly indebted, and were it not for one circumstance they would make his work superfluous, especially in view of the labors of the historians of the city, Mr. Todd, Mrs. Lamb and Mr. Wilson—to mention a few of many—and the contributions of Professor H. P. Johnston, Mr. J. A. Stevens and General Rodenbough, with Leake's *Life of Lamb,* among others.

That circumstance is the fact that during the past generation a new group of investigators and new series of documentary publications have added greatly to our knowledge of the events of the period under discussion. These have not hitherto, so far as can be discovered, been combined with the work of earlier investigators into a connected narrative. The contribution of Professor Flick to the history of the New York loyalists; Professor Becker's admirable and exhaustive study of pre-revolutionary politics in New York; Professor Schlesinger's monograph on the mercantile element in the Revolution; Mr. Fisher's *Struggle for Independence;* and other works of like sort but of perhaps less general importance, have very greatly increased our knowledge and our understanding of the subject. At the same time the valuable publications of the New York Historical Society, among which the Colden and Lee papers and the minutes of the committee for detecting conspiracies are eminent, have made available a mass of information hitherto inaccessible save to such indefatigable investigators as

Professor Becker, and much of which was not suited to his purposes.

Out of this very considerable mass of material, together with newspapers in and out of New York, and a certain acquaintance with contemporary British affairs and documents, the author has endeavored to construct a narrative of New York City in the American Revolution. While he cannot pretend to have exhausted the subject—whatever effect he may have on his readers—he may at least hope that the story here told will prove not uninteresting, and it is, making allowance for his failings, as accurate as he has been able to make it. As the book is intended for a general audience it has not seemed desirable to indicate the source of every statement here made in "furious footnotes" that "growl 'neath every page"; but the sources of his information are indicated above, and in some cases noted elsewhere.

To those upon whose labors he has drawn so largely for his information he expresses his grateful acknowledgment, not the least to that most remarkable of all works which has hitherto appeared on the history of the city, Mr. I. N. Phelps Stokes' magnificent contribution in his *Iconography of New York,* than which there is no more important, as there is no more beautiful, work extant on any such subject. Finally he must acknowledge his particular debt to his friend Professor Carl Becker of Cornell University, who has not merely contributed so much to the subject by his writings, but has been kind enough to give the author the benefit of his knowledge by reading through the manuscript of the present volume. To him; to Mr. Henry R. Drowne of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in New York; to Professor Andrew Keogh of the Yale University Library; to

Mr. Walter B. Briggs of the Widener Library of Harvard University; to Mr. Alexander J. Wall of the New York Historical Society, and to Mr. Victor H. Paltsits of the New York Public Library, who has not merely provided the illustrations but has read the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions in regard to it, the author's particular obligations are gratefully acknowledged.

WILBUR C. ABBOTT.

CAMBRIDGE, April, 1929.

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THE MONTRESOR PLAN OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, 1776 *Cover lining*

From the very rare first issue, dated 1766, owned by the New York Historical Society.

Captain John Montresor, engineer and surveyor, began the plan after December 16, 1765, when he noted in his *Journals* that he had been requested by General Gage, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in America "to Sketch him a plan . . . on a large Scale" of the city "with its environs and adjacent country together with its harbour." The survey was made during the Stamp Act riots, and Montresor said he had to make it "*Sub Rosa* as observations might endanger ones house and effects if not ones life." This handicap precluded a complete and accurate plan; but it is itself a commentary on the disturbed state of the city which it depicted for military purposes. It was dedicated to Gage, and engraved in London in the spring of 1767.

THE "ATLANTIC NEPTUNE" VIEW OF NEW YORK FROM THE NORTHWEST, BEFORE 1773 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

From the drawing by Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres, who prepared the notable *Atlantic Neptune* for the use of the Royal Navy of Great Britain. Taken from the very rare impression owned by R. T. H. Halsey, Esq., which originally belonged to the King of Sardinia. Stokes (*Iconography of Manhattan Island*, vol. I, pp. 346 ff.) could trace but five extant copies, and said "it is generally considered one of the most attractive and interesting representations of New York in the eighteenth century" and probably more accurate than "the Carwitham or any other early view of the city."

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From a lithograph by A. Weingartner, published in *Valentine's Manual* for 1858.

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From the original broadsheet in the New York Historical Society.

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From the original water-color sketch by Archibald Robertson of the British Engineers. Now in the Spencer Collection at the New York Public Library.

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From the original water-color sketch by Archibald Robertson of the British Engineers. Now in the Spencer Collection at the New York Public Library.

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From the original water-color sketch by Archibald Robertson of the British Engineers. Now in the Spencer Collection at the New York Public Library.

It was at Kip's Bay that the British troops landed on September 15, 1776, when they captured New York. The ships represented in the sketch are the *Phœnix*, *Roebuck*, *Carisford*, *Fanshaw*, and *Rose*.

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From a lithograph by George Hayward, published in *Valentine's Manual* for 1861.

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The New York Theatre was erected on this site in 1826. It is now occupied by numbers 46–48 Bowery.

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From the original caricature entitled "Magna Britannia: her Colonies Reduced." Britannia is represented as slipping powerless off the world with her limbs (the Colonies) severed from her. Her shield lies useless by her side, her lance has pierced New England, and the laurel branch has fallen from the hand of Pennsylvania. The English oak is merely a bare stump, and the British ships carry brooms at their mastheads to show that they are for sale.

CHAPTER I

New York City, 1763–1783

"IF we would study with profit the history of our ancestors," wrote Macaulay at the beginning of that famous third chapter of his History in which he describes the state of England in 1685, "we must never forget that the country of which we read was a very different country from that in which we live." It is a platitude which, like all platitudes, is no less true because it is so obvious. Nowhere is it truer than in relation to those huge aggregations of human beings and their habitations, the modern cities; and most of all in a city like New York, that modern "Bagdad on the Subway" of O. Henry's tales. In the latter half of the eighteenth century the great cities of Europe were not, indeed, what they are now; but Paris and London had passed the half million mark and were, making allowance for time and circumstance, in the same relative position as they are to-day. But New York's case is different. Not merely have her limits been enlarged and her numbers increased beyond those of any city then in existence in the world, and her population altered in character, if possible, even more than in numbers; not merely have her buildings changed no less in size and number and in type, even in materials; but the very nature of the place has altered beyond recognition.

An eighteenth century Londoner could find his way about his native town to-day with far less difficulty than an early New Yorker. He would find much that is new; but he

would recognize much that had survived from that earlier day. An old New Yorker might recognize the names of some of the older streets; he could still find refreshment in Fraunces' Tavern; he could read the names of some of his friends in Trinity church-yard; he might find the Battery and the Bowling Green, though the Aquarium would ill supply the place of old Fort George. But even within the limits of the town he knew he would find himself a stranger in another world; a world filled with strange structures, still stranger inhabitants, and with noises stranger and more fearful still. For old New York has gone. It has not merely been swallowed up in the modern metropolis; it has been replaced by that metropolis; and only in a few names here and there, of families, or streets named for them, or in the pious efforts of those whose ancestors played a part in it, to preserve its memory does even that memory survive. For, unlike London or Paris, it is now occupied by millions to whom its past is, unfortunately if inevitably, as indifferent as it is unknown. Yet that past has interest and importance, both in itself and as a part of the history of the country in which it has grown to be the chief city; and at no time greater than in the years which saw the separation of that country from European dominance, the years of the American Revolution.

In that long vanished period of her history the town or city of New York was by all accounts of visitors from abroad one of the most agreeable places of residence outside of Europe—to some it seems so still, but with a difference. Situated upon the very tip of Manhattan Island, between the East and North rivers, facing one of the most splendid

harbors in the world, its location was rivalled in picturesque quality only by Quebec and Rio Janeiro; and its facilities for residence and trade nowhere surpassed. It still was relatively small; and though it was beginning to pass Boston, now for the moment somewhat declining, its population of some twenty thousand souls was less than that of Philadelphia. It had, indeed, long since outgrown the old Dutch settlement. Wall Street was no longer the limit of the town; the Bowery was not the rural lane which it had been and which its name implied; but even that implication was not then so utterly preposterous as it seems to-day to those few aborigines who still know what it means. Yet so little had the place grown in the preceding century that the northernmost boundaries of New York then scarcely reached beyond that now densely populated area known as Chambers Street. City Hall Park was still "the Fields"; and save to the northeast where a new settlement or "addition" was then growing up about First Street, the houses grew more and more scattered, and one passed almost at once into a region of country-seats and cultivated farms long before he reached the northern limits of the island.

Measured by standards of these more prolific times, this seems small growth for the century and a half since the city had been founded; but it expressed development out of proportion to its numbers. Already New York gave promise of that complexity of population which has made it perhaps the most cosmopolitan metropolis in the world. Its earliest settlers, Dutch and Walloons, still had their representatives; and up the river, as far as Albany, lay the patroonships granted by the Dutch West India Company to Schuylers and van Rennsselaers and their fellows; many still resident

on their great estates, like the old French seigneurs on the St. Lawrence. But to them, as to the town, had soon been added other elements. Pioneers pressing westward from Connecticut into the Westchester district; settlers from New England, founding towns on Long Island to the very borders of New Netherland; and, with its conquest by the English, men of Old England, as of New, found lodgment in New York.

To these again, as Louis the Fourteenth, under the influence of his "delusion of grandeur" and a religious mistress, revoked the Edict of Nantes and drove his Huguenot subjects out of France, was added a French Protestant element; and it is one of the curious circumstances of history that those highly divergent regions, New York and South Africa, were settled originally by the Dutch; reinforced at the same moment by French Huguenots; conquered—though at very different times—by the English; and, if one may venture prophecy, each destined to an independent future. As the eighteenth century went on, there came still other elements. Besides a little stream of British immigrants—Scotch fleeing after Killiecrankie, Irish after Boyne, refugees from the ill-fated risings of the "Fifteen" and the "Forty-five," bound servants or free settlers, as the case might be—some Germans and some Jews, with a considerable number of negro slaves, all added to the size and still more to the complexity of old New York. Nor is it without some small significance that one reads as early as the year 1768 of those phenomena we associate with much later times, the Irish and the German "vote" already making themselves felt in this small but growing metropolis.

Already, too, the town was assuming its character as a

commercial capital. It was the market, the port of entry and the outlet, not, indeed, as now, for a continent, but for what was for that day a wide and populous area—half of New Jersey and more than half of Connecticut, and western Massachusetts, which, with the Hudson valley and its tributaries, comprised perhaps a sixth of the whole population of the colonies. It divided the profits of the fur-trade with Albany; it dealt largely with the West Indies, whose rum and sugar and indigo filled its warehouses. It dealt, as well, with London, and directly or by devious ways with its old mistress Holland; and in its ship-yards were built vessels for Dutch as well as English and colonial ship-owners. It formed, with Philadelphia and Boston, one of the three great "societies" of the northern states; and it was the headquarters of the commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, with what profit and prestige that brought—though the direction of a thousand men or so was not greatly calculated to provide much of either.

It had grown in wealth more than in population. With a harbor seldom if ever frozen over, and protected from the open sea by islands; surrounded on three sides by deep water; with one of the great rivers of the continent giving access far into the interior, its people took naturally to trade. In consequence it was pre-eminently commercial in standards as in life; and this was at once its boast and a charge against it—in which respect it seems but little changed. Lying as it did between New England and the South, it had a quality which differed from them both and was compounded of neither. Hospitable, even lavish, in its entertainment, it seemed "unintellectual" and "over material" to a Bostonian, somewhat "pushing" to a Southerner.

To Lieutenant-Governor Colden, Scotch by birth and Philadelphian by adoption, many New Yorkers who "have rose suddenly from the lowest rank of the People to considerable Fortunes, & chiefly by illicit trade" appeared to possess qualities in accordance with that circumstance; and it would be beyond the province of this study to attempt to judge whether the inhabitants of New York have altered in that regard or not. Still less would it be fitting to comment on John Adams' observation that "with all the opulence and splendor of this city, there is little good breeding to be found. . . . At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable; there is no modesty, no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and altogether." The comments of a sorely tried official and a punctilious Boston lawyer based in each case largely on their observation of the members of one group in New York are perhaps no fair basis on which to judge the whole, and we have only to look about us to perceive how greatly all this has changed.

Finally in politics the city revealed that curious division which it still maintains, a division which is to-day perhaps best symbolized by the existence of what is known, chiefly beyond its borders, as "Wall Street" and "Tammany," the two characteristic products of the metropolis in the minds of many persons not so fortunate as to live in New York. Even in those days it had two elements, the wealthier and more conservative group which prior to the Revolution largely dictated its policies and exercised no small influence even in that great crisis; besides a poorer, more unruly and, in general, a more recently arrived element which provided an increasingly powerful counterweight to the "solid" men.

It revealed, in fact, the ancient division between the party of "order" and the party of "liberty." In the colonial period the city was regarded as essentially moderate in its attitude, realistic rather than idealistic, inclined to view all questions with an eye to their substance as well as their appearance. It had in earlier days perhaps not wholly approved of Governor Andros, but, unlike Boston, it had not driven him out. It had had its Leisler and its Zenger incidents; but it had not exiled its Quakers and its Baptists; and it does not seem to have had any witches, or at least it said nothing about them. Its Jewish element was probably not as strong as that of Rhode Island in those days; and it had no such record as Boston of having driven men out for their opinions, perhaps because of its more heterogeneous population which made for tolerance; perhaps, as its critics asserted, because it was less interested in opinions than in profits.

Yet if one may perceive in pre-revolutionary New York certain characteristics not wholly unknown to-day, its physical appearance has altered more profoundly than what is called in modern phrase its "spiritual" content. As one came up the harbor in those earlier days, instead of that magnificent sky-line of enormous buildings, the great bridge which spans the East River, and the vast warehouses and factories which line its banks, he saw before him a low-lying town just covering the tip of the island. The first thing which confronted him was the fort and the batteries forming its outworks, a formidable array extending from the Whitehall Slip on the southeast to Battery Place on the other side. Set on an artificial mound some fourteen feet in height, its corners defended by bastions, Fort George and its curtains, with a hundred and twenty guns frowning over the harbor,

seemed dangerous enough. But it was not so dangerous as it seemed; and events proved that it was not even "questionable whether any number of cannon would prevent ships passing with a favorable wind and tide; and indeed whether New York was capable of defence by land against a powerful marine force." The contemporary military engineer who thus reported knew his business; for the fort was commanded on its landward side by high ground; the Battery, then as now, served chiefly to "furnish the citizens with an agreeable walk which is open to refreshing breezes from the bay"; and the fort, as he goes on to say, "although it carried a respectful appearance with it (at a distance) . . . seems to have been intended for profit and form rather than defence."

As one went up East River, then as now, though on far smaller scale, he passed the docks and wharves which evidenced the town's chief industry, with names that for the most part still remain—the Whitehall Slip from which the ferry went, even in those days, to Staten Island, Cruger, Murray, Rodman, Beekman and Peck, so to the Ship Yards. But on the other side, though the Paulus Hook Ferry went then as now to the Jersey shore, the shelving banks, since filled to deeper water, were less accessible, and the North River played then no such part as it does to-day. Yet if that shore-line and sky-line would have seemed strange to a visitor from the twentieth century, the town would have seemed stranger still. From that most homelike and peaceful of military posts, Fort George, its barracks for two hundred men now all but vacant, its two useless powder magazines, its governor's house and garden, a sentry or two perhaps—and perhaps not—he would look then as now across

the Bowling Green and up Broadway. But then he would have seen the gilded leaden statue of George III in classical garb, copied from Marcus Aurelius; encircled by an iron railing, every other post of which, according to tradition, held a lantern. Beyond it ran a double row of shade trees guarding the stately houses of the leading citizens which clustered in that neighborhood. At Number One Broadway stood the handsome residence of Captain Kennedy of the Royal Navy, Collector of the Port, member of the Provincial Council, and heir-apparent to the earldom of Cassilis; next to it the house presently occupied by his father-in-law, John Watts, Speaker of the Assembly and member of the Council; next that of R. R. Livingston, Supreme Court Justice; then that of the van Cortlandts; and across the way the office of the Provincial Secretary and the King's Arms Tavern, in whose ball-room on the second floor were held the "assemblies" of New York society.

Such was the contrast between those days and these which lower Broadway typifies. Then as now the visitor was impressed with the amazing diversity of architecture as he passed up the street—but with a difference—for then he would have perceived in place of the sky-scrapers of to-day "grand, neat, painted brick buildings," business and residence intermingled, houses, blacksmith and joiners' shops, taverns and mansions indiscriminately. Then as now, he would have passed old Trinity Church at Wall Street; but then he would have stopped to admire St. Paul's at Vesey and the Fields—"cost eighteen thousand pounds, York currency"; and beyond he could have seen the barracks, the alms-house, the new prison and the hospital, and, as he came back, the new King's College building down on Green-

wich Street. He might, indeed, have driven the pleasant way to Greenwich itself, past country-seats by the water-side—George Harrison's and Leonard Lispenard's, Commissary Abraham Mortier's, Lady Warren's, James Jauncey's, Colonel William Bayard's, Oliver De Lancey's "Chelsea"; and coming back the other side, the new and splendid mansion of Councillor Apthorpe in Bloomingdale, James Duane's, John Watts' "Rose Hill," the houses of the three Stuyvesants, James De Lancey, Eliot, Herrin, Dyckman—and he might have somehow recalled those names as connected with certain streets of somewhat different character from these pleasant country roads and lanes of suburban New York as it was in those pre-revolutionary days.

It is the fashion now to take the visitor to New York to a great height, somewhat after a famous Biblical example, and from the top of the Woolworth Building or some such eminence, show him, if not the kingdoms of the world, at least the pomp and glory of the earth as it is expressed in the great panorama of that city. In those pre-revolutionary days, he would have been taken to the cupola of the Province Arms on Broadway and shown those edifices for which the town was then most notable—the churches—as well as the Rhinelander and Livingston sugar warehouses, and the Desbrosses distillery. Thence he could have seen Fresh Pond from which the town derived its water by a new pumping system just being installed; and the new "addition" stretching along the Bowery and about First Street.

But the contrast between that view and one to-day was not more striking than between the "business" and the "shopping" districts then and now. For as the visitor turned

from his headquarters at Fraunces' Tavern along Dock Street to Coenties Slip he found himself in one of the town's busiest quarters, filled with dealers in heavier and more staple merchandise, metals and sugar, ship-chandlery, clothing and groceries and liquors of all sorts, Dutch names and English intermingled—Brinckerhoff, Cuyler and Van Dam, Clarkson and Sebring, Abeel and Bywanck, Livingston and Loudon, White, Gray and Cunningham, Duyckinck and Beekman, and that of a great figure in New York, Isaac Low, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and greater thereafter.

So as he went past Peter Goelet's "Golden Key," Wilmot and McEver's, and the printers, James Rivington and Hugh Gaine, he found his way to the shopping district. It had a long list of drapers and clothing dealers, tailors and jewellers—Bowne and Rickman, Bache, Bancker, Remsen, Duryea, Thurman, Colley the silversmith, Bruff the jeweller and goldsmith, John Allicocke, the liquor dealer, Robert and John Murray, whence Murray Hill was to take its name, Philip Livingston, who dealt in hardware, glass, marble chimney-pieces, rum and furs and was to sign the Declaration of Independence, and Francis Arden, butcher by profession, but more famous as the owner of Molyneux the prize-fighter, whose ring name was Pete Arden. Finally he would doubtless have been shown, among these numerous shops and warehouses, the mansion of William Walton whose magnificence reported in England, as indicating the prosperity of America, was said to have been one of the causes of the passage of the Stamp Act.

Such was the business quarter of the "metropolis and grand mart" of New York; a town of some twenty-five hun-

dred buildings, "a mile in length and not above half that in breadth," with "its centre of business and the situation of the houses so that the mean cartage from one part to another does not exceed above one-quarter of a mile, than which nothing can be more advantageous to a trading city." Thence to the West Indies went "bread, pease, rye-meal, Indian corn, apples, onions, boards, staves, horses, sheep, butter, cheese, pickled oysters, beef and pork" and eighty thousand barrels of flour a year, all inspected and branded to keep up the quality." Thither came "chiefly rum, sugar and molasses, cash from Curaçao, and mules from the Spanish Main." "Wheat, flour, Indian corn and lumber shipped to Lisbon and Madeira, balance the Madeira wine imported"; and these with the logwood trade with Honduras, the exportation of flax-seed to Ireland; the imports of linen; "peltry of all kinds, purchased with rum, ammunition, blankets, and wampum"; dry-goods from England, cotton from St. Thomas and Surinam, lime-juice and "Nicaragua wood"; duck and chequered linen; "oxnabrigs," cordage and tea from Hamburg and Holland, such were the commodities which made up the bulk of the New York business. Nor should we enquire too closely, perhaps, how much of it was in strict accordance with British regulations as to imperial trade.

The town had besides the usual accompaniments of such a place, a dozen inns or so; two, or sometimes three newspapers conducted by Parker, Holt, Gaine or Weyman—everything, in fact, but theatres. And doubtless nothing would have seemed more extraordinary to the twentieth-century visitor than the fact that there was but one little play-house, on John Street, and that was seldom occupied. Nothing, perhaps, except the government of the town, with its seven

wards, its mayor and recorder appointed by the governor, its aldermen acting also as magistrates; and, above all, the fact that the town could not tax itself but petitioned the Assembly every year to be allowed to assess its citizens for the necessary sums. If this were not enough to astonish him, he might have been assured, as John Adams was, that the whole charge of the Province was between five and six thousand pounds annually, York money, as against some sixteen thousand in Massachusetts—which gave that Massachusetts citizen something to think about. But he dismissed it by explaining it, as many men have done, by the cost of "Harvard College, forts and other things."

Pressing more curiously into government, he would soon have learned the inner workings of the province and the town. There was the City Hall, with a library and a fire department within its walls; and outside of it the cage, the pillory, stocks and whipping-post to put the fear of law, if not of God, into the petty malefactors. Above that lesser jurisdiction stood the usual courts—Justices, Common Pleas and a Supreme Court, Admiralty, Prerogative or Probate, and Chancery, with appeals to governor and council in due course. Besides those dignitaries, the collector of the port, the guardians of the government stores, and the post-office officials made up the personnel of the administration of New York. Their authority ran not only through the city but over the twelve or fourteen counties of the province; and with that one came at once into the great manorial holdings—six in Westchester; those of Phillipse and Heathcote, Beekman and Schuyler who held most of Dutchess; seven Livingston townships; near seven hundred square miles of the van Rensselaer estates about Albany. There, too, one

came in touch with those alliances which linked de Peyster, van Cortlandt and Schuyler with Livingston and Alexander, De Lancey with Phillipse, van Cortlandt, Schuyler, Heathcote and Smith and Duane again with Livingston—an almost feudal hierarchy, controlling the offices as it did the wealth, yet dividing against itself after the manner of such groups since they first began.

He would have learned of that canny John Watts, his son Stephen in the British army; one son-in-law, his next-door neighbor, Captain Kennedy, the future Earl of Cassilis; another, Sir John Johnson, son of Sir William, the great Indian agent and lord of the north country beyond Albany; while his son, Robert, married the daughter of Alexander, the pseudo "Lord Stirling," a bankrupt but enthusiastic "patriot." He would have heard how James Duane was the chief counsel in that great dispute between New York and New Hampshire over the lands lying between them and now claimed by each, so-called "New Hampshire Grants," in which he had invested not only his profesional reputation but a great part of his fortune. He would have learned of the official hierarchy, the governor and his council—Oliver De Lancey, John Apthorpe, John Watts, William Walton, Daniel Horsmanden, the Chief Justice, son-in-law of Colonel de Peyster; William Smith, Reade, and Roger Morris. These were supported, in their turn, by the "good-natured, peaceable and sociable" commander-in-chief of His Majesty's forces in North America, General Thomas Gage, whose house stood on Broad Street; and whose command in New York City numbered perhaps a hundred men, besides, at his call, a vessel of the royal navy, just now the *Coventry,* and sometimes a sloop or two.

So he would have come finally to the governor, or rather, at that moment, the lieutenant-governor, Cadwallader Colden, one of the most permanent of all permanent officials in North America. Disliked by the "lower orders" who entertained a fantastic illusion that he had been "a drummer-boy in Scotland," and a court favorite, he was in fact a graduate of Edinburgh University, and of the London School of Medicine; a distinguished botanist and historian, the correspondent of European savants; a friend of Benjamin Franklin; the author of many works, including a "History of the Five Nations." Next to Franklin he was the most eminent scientist and philosopher in America; he was one of the few Americans with a European reputation—and he was the father of a future Senator of the United States. He had been born in the year of the Revolution of 1688 and was now along in years. He had been in New York since 1718, after some years of medical practice in Philadelphia; and he had held office nearly all his life. He was cautious, conservative and "safe," with little sympathy for the democratic movement then making way throughout the colonies, upholding the dignity of his office and the authority of government with the assistance of a council chiefly of like mind.

And over what sort of a community did they preside? Judge Jones has given us a picture of that old society of which he was a part.* "New York," he says, "consists principally of merchants, shopkeepers, and tradesmen, so sustains the reputation of honest, punctual and fair dealers. With respect to riches there is not so great an inequality as is common in Boston and in some other places. Every man

*Jones, *History of New York.*

of industry and integrity has it in his power to live well, and many are the instances of persons who came here distressed by their poverty, who now enjoy easy and plentiful fortunes." "New York is one of the most social places on the continent. The men collect themselves into weekly evening clubs. The ladies in winter are frequently entertained either at concerts of musick or assemblies and make a very good appearance." "The customs are similar to those prevailing in England," but though New Yorkers "follow the London fashions, by the time we adopt them, they become disused in England. Our affluence during the late war introduced a degree of luxury in tables, dress and furniture with which we were before unacquainted. But still we are not so gay a people as our neighbors in Boston and several of the southern colonies."

Even then "the price of labor became so enormously enhanced that we have been constrained to import negroes from Africa, who are employed in all kinds of servitude and trades." "The people both in town and country are sober, industrious and hospitable, though intent on gain. The richer sort keep very plentiful tables abounding with great varieties of flesh, fish and fowl, and all kinds of vegetables." "The common drinks are beer, cyder and weak punch and Madeira wine. For dessert we have fruits in vast plenty, of different kinds and different species," despite the fact that "few or no experiments have been made in agriculture. The farms being large our husbandmen have little recourse to art for improving their lands."

Finally, the people seem "in general healthy and robust, taller but shorter-lived than Europeans, and both with respect to their minds and bodies arrive sooner to an age of

maturity. Breathing a serene dry air, they are more sprightly in their natural tempers than the people of England, and hence instances of suicide are very uncommon." As to the ladies, "They are comely and dress well, and scarce any of them have distorted shapes; tinctured with a Dutch education, they manage their families with becoming parsimony, good providence and singular neatness. The practice of extravagant gaming, common to the fashionable part of the fair sex, is a vice with which they cannot be justly charged. There is nothing they so generally neglect as reading, and indeed all arts for the improvement of the mind, in which, I confess, we have set them an example. They are modest, temperate and charitable, naturally sprightly, sensible and good humored; and by the help of a more elevated education would undoubtedly possess all the accomplishments desirable in the sex."

As to the professions, he tells us, the worst was education. The schools were "in the lowest order; the instructors want instruction; and through a long shameful neglect of all the arts and sciences, our common speech is extremely corrupt and the evidences of bad taste, both as to thought and language, are visible in all our proceedings, publick and private." The practice of medicine was scarcely better. "Few physicians are eminent for their skill. Quacks abound like locusts in Egypt"; and no wonder, for "any man at his pleasure sets up for physician, apothecary or surgeon." On the other hand the clergy made a better showing, as able, devoted, educated men.

So to his own profession, the lawyers. "All free governments," the dictionary-maker, Noah Webster, observed of these same years, "abound with lawyers. Where men have

the privilege of thinking and acting for themselves, they will involve themselves in debt and quarrel with their neighbors. In proportion to the debts and disputes of the people, lawyers will multiply. Of these America furnishes a plentiful growth and New York has its share." Though the New York bar was not as eminent as it was to become, it contained some notable figures. Besides the chief-justice, Horsmanden, the attorney general, John Tabor Kempe, and like dignitaries, there were the two William Smiths, the elder now declining in years, the younger then engaged on a history of the province and destined to titular chief justiceship of New York. In his office was the young Gouverneur Morris, "King's College '68," politician, financier, and later diarist. Of the Yale graduates, besides Judge Jones, "'50," the historian, were James Duane and John Morin Scott, the popular leaders; and presently a certain Edward Fanning, brought by Governor Tryon in 1771, who was later to take part with him in an attack on New Haven, and much later still to ask for a degree from his alma mater for saving her from destruction on that occasion. There was the conservative Benjamin Kissam; in his office Lindley Murray, the future grammarian, and John Jay, "King's College, '60," of still greater eminence in later years. Of Jay's later associates and rivals at the bar, two were destined to play some part in the ensuing history of the place—one the son of a president of Princeton then preparing to enter that institution, Aaron Burr; the other the son of a West Indian merchant then being brought up in trade but presently to enter King's College and so graduate into public life by his addresses to the people in "the Fields," Alexander Hamilton. Nor should we omit John Coghill Knapp, "the pettifogger," and "Sam Jones who

will work for six shillings a day and live accordingly." And with the lawyers we come finally to politics.

The city was at least not dull upon the side of politics, nor had it been for a full generation. Twenty years before it had been the scene of the great Zenger controversy over freedom of the press, for his part in which "Lord Stirling's" father had been disbarred for a year; and in 1760 and again in 1764 its people successfully opposed the right of search and impressment of seamen. It had been stirred by the refusal of the Assembly to pay the judges' salaries without some voice in their appointment, so that they were now reimbursed from the quit-rents of the province and were thus independent of the colonial legislature, which was a source of grievance. Just now it was, like all the other colonies, in the throes of the great problem of imperial reorganization, threatening still more serious disturbances; half consciously, half unconsciously, at the parting of the ways. However Judge Jones may have voiced the opinion of the great majority of the sounder merchants when he wrote of the illicit trade in view of England's navy and her markets as "impolitic and unreasonable howsoever much it may conduce to the advantage of particular merchants," certain gentlemen who did much business with Holland in the matter of tea and "oxnabrigs" and such like commodities, would have denied it.

Those persons would have contended that Americans had the right to trade where they liked, and they the right to provide what the public wanted. Certain lawyers would have argued that Parliament had no authority to tax the colonies and would have questioned even its right to limit local government in the way of forbidding the issue of paper

money and the utterance of provincial loans. Certain popular leaders would have been found with still more "advanced" sentiments. There was a retired ship-owner, Alexander MacDougall, of pronounced leanings toward greater liberty. There was a certain Captain Marinus Willett, sometime serving under Abercrombie in the late war, of that same party. There was John Lamb, "largely engaged in the liquor trade," and later described by his commander Montgomery of "restless genius but bad temper," a violent "patriot"; and, most violent of all, a bird of passage, one Isaac Sears, of indeterminate profession, sometime apparently "an inspector of pot ashes" but more eminent in New York and elsewhere as a prophet of discontent. There were some respectable and respected citizens, like Philip and Robert Livingston and young John Jay; old families like the Schuylers and the De Peysters, lawyers like Scott and Smith and Duane; merchants like even the moderate Isaac Low, who were becoming restive under the restrictions placed on American commerce and manufactures; editors like Holt prepared to print the sentiments of this element.

It was, indeed, a manifold opposition. There were those who raised constitutional question of the authority of Parliament over the colonies, enlisting many of the propertied and enfranchised class. There were those who sought their own advantage from a change. There were those who resented the dominance of the official element in the governor's council, and the Assembly, demanding a more democratic government—and there was besides, a more violent group. "The masses," one might have been told, "thought a revolution would change their subjection to one of king-

ship." They consequently favored change by any means and on any ground. Prepared to uphold the merchants in the desire for freer trade and greater economic independence, they were equally prepared to go to lengths in opposition to government which the merchants as a class would certainly repudiate.

There is no better indication of the reasons why many men, especially of this last group, went into the revolution against the authority of Great Britain than the story told by the late Mellen Chamberlain of his interview with one of the minutemen who fought at Lexington. In a few sentences it sweeps away a mass of legal, constitutional, economic, and theoretical verbiage which has, no doubt, both interest and importance, but which, too strongly insisted on as a motive of action for the masses who took part in the revolutionary struggle, obscures the simple outlines of the case.

"I asked him," said Mr. Chamberlain, "if he fought because of the oppression of the British government? He said he had never noticed it. Whether it was because of the Stamp tax? He had never seen a stamp. Whether it was because of tea? He said he had never drunk a cup of tea in his life. Whether it was because of the doctrines of Sidney and of Locke? He said he had never heard of them. Then why had he fought at Lexington? Because, said he, we had always governed ourselves. We always meant to. They didn't mean we should."

Thus Levi Preston summed up the causes of the American Revolution as he and many of his fellows saw them. Though that by no means exhausts the problem for historians, it may serve to explain why many men took the side

they did in a cause whose more remote and abstract implications, and even those more immediate circumstances of mercantile importance, never occurred to them; and with this we may begin to consider how these affected the city of New York.

CHAPTER II

The Sons of Liberty

THE story of New York in the American Revolution cannot be confined to an account of the events in that city, or province, or even in America; or to the actual years of the conflict. We must take a wider view in time and space to comprehend that movement and its reaction in New York and for that there is no more significant starting-point than Great Britain at the accession of George III in 1760. It was a great but difficult moment in the affairs of the English people. For five years they had been engaged in a world-war; and in the twelvemonth before the new sovereign came to the throne, their arms had been everywhere successful. In that period their enemies, the French, had been overthrown in India, in America and on the sea; and though England's chief ally, Frederick the Great, had meanwhile defended himself with difficulty against the foes which his unscrupulous aggressions had raised against him on the Continent, this had not seriously affected the English position in the rest of the world.

But if the "year of victory," 1759, had brought its triumphs, it had brought responsibilities as well. Great Britain had now acquired enormous additions to her colonial empire. She had before her the problem of organizing and administering those great conquests; of amalgamating them with her older possessions into a true imperial edifice; and of defending her new frontiers. She had accumulated a na-

tional debt of huge proportions for those days of the lesser finance; and she was confronted with a great crisis in her domestic politics.

This last was her immediate concern, and on it, in no uncertain sense, depended the fate of the new world empire which the war had put in her hands. The situation centred in the rivalry between her new king and the Whig party. Three-quarters of a century before, that great political connection had driven James II from the throne, and since that time the chief element in English politics had been the Whig ascendancy, secured by their enlightened policy, their powerful political organization, their multitude of followers, and their control of all the offices. Through their leaders, a small oligarchy of great nobles, they controlled the upper house of Parliament, and through their adroit political management, their hold on the two sovereigns of the house of Hanover who preceded George III, and their following in the country, they dominated the House of Commons, and in consequence the administration.

To a king who, like George III, was bent on directing the government, such a situation was intolerable; and from the moment of his accession he devoted all of his undoubted talent for politics to the overthrow of this oligarchic rule. In this he was supported, as events proved, by a considerable section of the English people who were weary of the dominance of what Pitt called "the silken barons" of the Whig oligarchy. That oligarchy was first divided against itself, its fragments recruited by the king in his own service, the Tory party revivified under his direction, and its antagonists finally overthrown after a bitter struggle. Their fall was accomplished scarcely less by the rivalry among them-

selves than by the attack of the king; and his triumph was chiefly due to his adoption of the methods by which his opponents had long maintained themselves in power. In this he was successful. Ten years from the time when he ascended the throne, he was able to call his friend and follower, Lord North, to the head of a ministry every member of which had at some time or other belonged to a Whig government; but all of whom now tended toward the new Toryism to which George III ensured a lease of power nearly, if not quite, as long as that which the old Whig party had enjoyed. That party was not merely defeated, it was destroyed. It was broken into groups which hated each other more than they hated the Tories or the king, and many of whose members were willing to find political profit at the expense of their rivals in the same party. And the fact that its destruction was largely accomplished by the jealousies of its own leaders became one of the chief elements of weakness in the nation now facing one of the great crises of its imperial history. For at this crisis English politics produced no such great figures as before and after; and in the clash of politicians, as always, statesmanship declined.

The next problem which confronted England in the years following the accession of George III, was one connected with her empire. The first step in the domestic struggle, as in imperial reorganization, was the series of events which led to the signature of the Peace of Paris of 1763. Pitt's colleagues in the cabinet refused to follow him into war with Spain; and, though they were soon driven to the course he had advised, it was without his leadership, for he resigned before the struggle began between Great Britain and

her new antagonist. Despite that struggle the powers were on the way to peace; and for that peace the Parliament, which had followed Pitt to war, voted five to one, in the face of the protests of the great war minister. His colleague, Newcastle, the head of the Whig party organization, George III was able to overthrow by taking from him much of his power of appointment to offices, and so destroying the only source of strength which that noble machine politician enjoyed. The two chiefs of the Whigs thus disposed of, the King summoned his friend Lord Bute to head the ministry which signed the Peace. But his tenure of office was brief; and the ink was scarcely dry on the great Peace, when a new prime minister, Pitt's brother-in-law, George Grenville, was called to office, to solve, if possible, the threefold problem of English imperial policy—administration, finance, and defense.

Those issues were brought to a head at almost the same moment that he came to office by two circumstances on the opposite sides of the world, which revealed the scope of the British Empire, its problems, and the interrelation of its affairs, especially those of America and India, which was to become so important in later years. Almost simultaneously the ruler of Bengal in India, and the Indian chief, Pontiac, in the newly-acquired region of the Great Lakes in North America, rebelled against the English power. It was necessary, therefore, to devise means to defend and to administer this far-reaching empire by other means than had sufficed in earlier days; and while preparations were made to meet these new dangers in military ways, Grenville's ministry took steps to reorganize the whole colonial system in accordance with its altered character.

The measures which Grenville proposed were such as seemed natural under the circumstances. New administrative units, East and West Florida, Quebec and Grenada, were organized. The troops were redistributed; the American establishment enlarged; and the colonists, who had sought protection against Pontiac, were asked to help provide accommodations for the forces designed for their defense. The loose and long-evaded acts which regulated imperial commerce were revised, and measures were taken to make them more effective, in accordance with the traditional Whig policy of making the Empire a self-contained unit, each of whose parts was regulated for the common good, with England as the financial and industrial as well as the political centre. New sources of revenues were sought by the imposition of fresh taxes at home, and the revision of the imperial customs. Finally, to help defray the cost of administering the North American colonies, it was proposed to extend the long-established British stamp tax to those colonies. Thus Grenville approached his great and thankless task, opposed at every point by his brother-in-law Pitt, to whose extravagance much of the existing situation was due, and who in his capacity as minister had earlier advocated nearly every detail of the policy which he now resisted.

With this America began to play her part on the stage of world-politics. It was only natural that English ministers should consider her in the new situation of affairs. She had a population of nearly two millions, with vast if undeveloped resources, and paying, it was estimated, a fiftieth of the *per capita* tax borne by Englishmen. The war had been fought in her interest no less than in that of England; from it she

had derived the greatest benefit. It seemed, therefore, to English ministers, and to the English people in general, no more than fair that the colonists should obey the laws regulating the trade on which they depended; accept imperial officials and troops, as they desired imperial protection; and meet some part of the cost of their own administration as it related to the empire whose benefits they enjoyed.

To the colonists the case seemed very different. The war, though on the whole they had profited greatly and many individuals had made fortunes from it, had cost them many lives and much money. Its cessation was costing them much more by slackening of the trade, both legal and illegal, to which it had given rise. They pointed out that even the British government had recognized their undue proportion of its cost by repaying them a part of their contributions—a most ingenious argument. Beyond this issue lay the greater one of freedom to trade where and as they chose. The importation of sugar and molasses from the French West Indies, in defiance of the acts against it, had come to be regarded, if not quite legitimate, as not wholly reprehensible. It had not merely been condoned in practice but defended in principle as a natural right; and the large body of men engaged in it formed an important element in every northern seaport. The colonists moreover had not merely long resented and disregarded the old Whig policy which restricted their industry and commerce; they objected to Parliamentary interference with their financial expedients, especially the one dearest to their hearts, the issue of more or less unlimited paper money. They had chartered rights. They had the natural tendency of a pioneer community to dislike a distant central authority; they faced a peculiar situ-

ation in their own political affairs; and they were strongly influenced by what, for want of a better name, we call the spirit of the times. Finally they were, consciously and unconsciously, well on the way to nationality, and they were already rivals in fact if not in feeling, of the mother country.

One factor, in particular, was of great consequence. In the preceding century, one class of colonists had prospered greatly. Every province contained an aristocratic landowning or mercantile element; which, in accordance with the principles of the time, held the offices and dominated politics. On the other hand there was in every province a large and growing faction of landless or moneyless, working or pioneer classes, artisans or small landholders, for the most part late comers to America and for the most part debarred from the franchise. Besides these still, there was a group scarcely to be classed as either aristocracy or proletariat, made up of lawyers, publishers, shopkeepers, and the like. This group, since it did not belong to the official oligarchy which in nearly all the colonies monopolized administration, had no such share in public affairs, as many of its members believed was its due—and theirs.

Thus there were two factions; one group about the governor and council, the other in opposition; and for a generation or more the members of the latter group, supported by the public sentiment of the unenfranchised element, and by an increasing number of those opposed to the official monopoly of the "government," had been busy making their way into the provincial assemblies. There, and there only, they could find an outlet for their ambitions and a means of harassing their rivals. Those rivals were Americans like themselves. In New Hampshire it was the Wentworth

family which controlled land, trade, and the administration. In Massachusetts it was the group led by Hutchinson and Oliver; in Virginia it was—in general—the old planting interest of the "tide-water" region. In New York it was the so-called De Lancey faction whose rivals, the Livingstons, however, continually challenged their supremacy. In them all a closely-knit system of marriage alliances had produced little groups—"oligarchies" or "aristocracies" which dominated politics and society alike. On the other hand stood the popular leaders. In New Hampshire, the country districts in particular, under men like the lawyers Sullivan and Langdon, opposed the Portsmouth party of the Wentworths. In Boston, men like Hancock and the Adamses, Samuel the agitator and John the lawyer; in Virginia men like Patrick Henry; in New York men like Lamb, MacDougall, Willett and John Morin Scott, typified the party now challenging the long supremacy of the oligarchy.

The division went deep into local affairs. Almost every community held two parties at odds with each other on nearly every question; whether it was the "New Light" religious controversy in Connecticut, or the tobacco question in Virginia. And in these rivalries three things were apparent. The first was that, as usual, men divided into aristocratic and democratic factions very largely on the basis of their interests. The second was that the ruling oligarchy was closely allied with the English or imperial interest; and their opponents, in consequence, tended to oppose that powerful support which gave their rivals such an advantage in colonial politics. The third was that these divisions were accentuated by an infinity of local organizations, chiefly among the popular party. There were clubs, like the Whig Club in

New York; groups like that which brought together such men as Henry and Jefferson and Lee in the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg; caucuses like the North End Caucus which met at the Green Dragon in Boston and of which Samuel Adams was one of the leading spirits; lodges of Freemasons; New England congregations; and Philadelphia and Charleston fire-companies, which thus began their long career in politics.

To this was added another element—the spirit of the times. In the year preceding the Great Peace, there had appeared a volume from the pen of Jean Jacques Rousseau entitled the *Social Contract,* a book whose influence on the world it would be hard to estimate. It had not merely voiced the great and growing reaction against the tyranny of tradition, it provided a "philosophic" defense for that reaction, and a pseudo-historical basis, however unsound, for a new doctrine of equality. Against the laws of man it enunciated the "law of nature"; against the entrenched authority of custom and precedent it invoked what it called "natural rights." Above all it defended the doctrine that men, having once established society and government by contract among themselves, were entitled to break that mythical agreement and, by a new social contract, set up a system in accord with new conditions and desires. Those doctrines, in a sense, were not new nor were they originated by Rousseau. They were the product of an older and an English school of thought; and, so far as the American colonies were concerned, they had found lodgment there from the writings of the Puritan leaders, from Locke's philosophy in particular. But if Rousseau did not directly influence thought in America, his book revealed a spirit common to

all revolutionary elements on both sides the sea, which came to a head in those same years when George III was endeavoring to make himself supreme in his kingdom, and his minister Grenville applied his talents as a financier to the problem of reorganizing the British imperial system. The conjunction of these elements with the peculiar situation in colonial politics boded ill for an attempted extension of British authority.

Such was the position of England and America when the match was set to the mass of combustibles which had been slowly accumulating in the North American colonies for half a century. Its first spark was struck, as it chanced, by that brilliant, sinister figure which then played such a destructive part in English and colonial affairs, the clever, dissipated, unsubstantial Charles Townshend. Upon the introduction of the proposals to introduce a stamp-tax in America, he delivered a speech in favor of that measure. "Will these American children," he asked, "planted by our care, nourished up to strength and opulence by our indulgence, and protected by our arms, grudge to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy burden under which we lie?"

The answer was immediate and, from a colonial standpoint, complete. It came from Colonel Barré, a leader among the Whigs of Pitt's school, and one of Wolfe's officers at Quebec, a man who, like Governor Pownall and unlike almost every other member of the House of Commons, was familiar with America. His speech is one of the classics of revolutionary oratory. "They planted by your care!" he sneered. "No; your oppressions planted them in America. . . . They nourished by your indulgence! They grew by

your neglect of them! As soon as you began to care about them that care was exercised in sending persons to rule them in one department or another, who were perhaps the deputies of deputies to some members of this house, sent to spy out their liberties, to misrepresent their actions, and to prey upon them; men whose behaviour on many occasions has caused the blood of those *Sons of Liberty* to recoil within them. . . . And believe me—remember that I this day told you so—the same spirit of freedom which actuated that people at first will accompany them still."*

But Barré's eloquence fell on dull and unbelieving ears. Not one of the Whig champions who in later years denounced so bitterly the policy which brought America to rebellion now stood forward to support her cause. Pitt was not present; Burke and Fox were not yet in Parliament; and had they been it is by no means certain that they would at this time have opposed a measure so in accord with traditional Whig policy. For the Stamp Act was no revolutionary proposal. A Stamp-tax had long been known in England; it was in accord with the precedents of colonial management and with the necessities of the time. England's needs were pressing, and seemed more pressing than they were. The colonial agents, though, as in duty bound, they opposed any imperial taxation or regulation, seem for the most part to have privately believed that some colonial contribution was inevitable. But they were unable to suggest any alternative beyond the usual, constitutional, voluntary grants in their conferences with the British authorities and they agreed that to secure these would be difficult. The protests of the colonial assemblies, being reckoned unconstitu-

*S. R. Miner, *Colonel Isaac Barré,* 1901; H. F. Elliott, *Colonel Barré,* in *Macmillan's Magazine,* XXXV:109; J. H. Trumbull, *Sons of Liberty in 1755,* in *The New Englander,* 1876, pp. 299-313.

tional, were not received. The debate in Parliament, save for Barré's speech, was languid; and, as was observed, the fatal measure passed the House of Commons "with no more interest than a turnpike-bill."

This, whatever historians, wise in the event, have made of it, is not surprising. No one, not even the most astute of colonial politicians, then dreamed of the effect it was to produce upon America. Many of those who later became the most determined opponents of British rule applied for the posts of stamp commissioners, for themselves or for their friends—Richard Henry Lee of Virginia for himself, and Benjamin Franklin for his supporter, John Hughes, heading the list. Under such circumstances it seemed that the extension of English taxation to America would be consummated almost if not quite without serious protest.

Never were statesmen and politicians more at fault. The news of the Stamp Act proposals had, from the first, roused bitter opposition among the "popular" party in the colonies; and as soon as it was known, more than half of the colonial assemblies had petitioned against the measure. The bill became a law in March, 1765. In May Patrick Henry introduced resolutions in the Virginia House of Burgesses, denouncing the policy of taxing America, in a speech which, whatever the actual words and conduct of the orator, was crystallized into a legend, concluding with the famous phrase: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George III—may profit by their example!" The legend is almost certainly not true, but something of the sentiments it expressed had been voiced throughout the colonies, as the news of the Act spread; and with the Stamp Act the great drama of the American Revolution seems to begin.

But to one who had followed the course of American affairs and opinion closely, especially in the preceding two years, an explosion might have been expected, for the Stamp Act was only the most conspicuous, not the sole, nor even the first, cause of colonial discontent. The enforcement of the Navigation Acts, restricting trade, had already begun; the so-called Sugar or Molasses Acts had been renewed and extended. The tariff policy which threatened American trade, legal and illegal, was already under way before the enactment of the new law, and had stirred the resentment of a considerable and active part of the colonists. The ancient Anglo-Saxon hatred of a standing army had been roused by the proposals to quarter a force in the colonies. To the drain of specie from America by unfavorable trade balances was added now the danger of taxation, which, it was declared, would reduce her supply of coin still further, and, with her desire to issue paper money denied, her trade would suffer serious embarrassment. Finally the proposed administrative changes, however defensible and desirable from the point of view of an imperial administrator, went directly counter to the desire of the Americans to control their own officials, and in particular antagonized the views of the "popular" party in the colonial assemblies.

Whatever the cause of the immediate controversy, the fact was that the more "radical" element in the colonies had come to a state of mind which found material for resentment in any real or fancied interference of the mother-country in American affairs, at the same moment that the mother-country felt impelled to revise her imperial system and call upon her colonies for assistance. Already Otis had voiced a protest against the new course, and his fellow-Bos-

tonians had begun to resist the writs of assistance which interfered with their activities in what they regarded as the "free trade" to which they were entitled, but which His Majesty's officers, under the existing law, called by the harsher name of "smuggling." In New York the election of 1761 had given the Assembly into the hands of the popular party; and that Assembly had charged the committee corresponding with New York's agent in England to extend its field of operations and communicate with other colonial assemblies or their committees on the question of the measures of Parliament designed to tax America. That action was due largely to the fact that the hard times which followed the artificial prosperity of war had injured the merchant class, especially those concerned with illicit trade. Among many similar manifestations in the northern seaports, the New York merchants met in Burns' Tavern on January 27, 1764, to frame a protest to Parliament and establish a permanent committee on trade. This, in addition to the effort of the popular party to control the appointment, or the continuance in office, of colonial officials, by regulating their salaries, or withholding them altogether, joined to their effort to form a union of opinion or even of action among the various colonies, may be regarded as the first step in the assertion of American rights.

Thus when Barré delivered his famous philippic, there was material enough, both in spirit and organization, to make a colonial protest against British policy effective, once that protest was voiced. Spirit and organization alike were not long in finding their way into affairs; and by a curious means. During the debate on the Stamp Act there sat in the gallery of the House of Commons one Jared Ingersoll,

then agent for Connecticut, who, having opposed the bill to the best of his ability, was inclined to see the matter through. He heard Barré's speech; made notes of it; and sent a report of its peroration to his constituents in America. It reached New London in May, about the time that Patrick Henry was making his fiery protest in the Virginia House of Burgesses. It was printed in the *New London Gazette* on May 10, reprinted in the *Newport Mercury* of May 27, and in the *Boston Gazette* of August 27. Thence it was copied far and wide; and at the same time that the news of the hated act made its way through the colonies, the famous phrase became the rallying-cry of America.

Such was the origin of the "Sons of Liberty," and it is not without interest to remark, among the curious circumstances of the period, that the man who transmitted this phrase to the colonies was, upon the passage of the Stamp Act, offered the post of stamp-distributor for Connecticut. He sought the advice of Benjamin Franklin, then engaged in securing a similar position for one of his own political supporters in Pennsylvania. Franklin advised Ingersoll to take the place. He did so; but, returning to New Haven, he was bitterly assailed for his action, and finally prevailed upon to resign. A great crowd of his fellow-colonists accompanied him to Hartford, where, in the presence of a large and enthusiastic audience, he was compelled not only to renounce his office again, but to take off first his hat, then his wig, throw them into the air, and lead a cheer for "Liberty and Property," just four months after he had accepted the commission which brought him such unenviable publicity. It is small wonder that he wrote to his friend Colden on September 14 to take the best care he could of the "Stampt

papers" until he had further directions, for "all the Springs of Government are broken" and "I have been compelled in a most extraordinary manner to declare I would not directly or indirectly intermeddle with the Stampt papers intended for this Colony." Nor is it less to be wondered at that he is reported to have remarked to one of his companions as he headed the procession to Hartford on his white horse that he "felt like 'Death on his pale horse and all hell following.' "

Much the same scene was meanwhile being enacted in this summer of 1765 in nearly every colony. As early as the first of August the Bostonians destroyed a building then being erected for the Massachusetts stamp-agent, Oliver, as they suspected for a stamp office. A fortnight later they mobbed Oliver's house, and sacked the residence of Governor Hutchinson. Oliver was compelled to resign; and in quick succession he was followed by the other stamp-agents. By similar means the people of Annapolis, who had welcomed the Maryland stamp-master with equal cordiality, compelled him to give up his office. Philadelphia and Williamsburg followed a like course. In New York the stamp-distributor, James McEvers, warned by the events in the other colonies and the unfriendly attitude of his neighbors, surrendered his office; and by September there was but one stamp-agent left in the colonies, the obstinate old Quaker, Hughes, in Philadelphia. The men who, six months earlier, had sought the position of deputy stamp-agents with such determination were not slow in following the example of their superiors; and both groups exhibited even more energy in trying to get rid of their posts than they had earlier showed in trying to secure them.

The King's Arms Tavern, on the Southeast Corner of Whitehall and Bridge Streets.
From a lithograph by George Hayward, published in *Valentine's Manual* for 1854.

Under the circumstances this is not surprising. The outrages in Boston were not isolated instances of the mob spirit which flourished throughout the colonies during this summer of 1765. Apart from the visitations inflicted on almost every stamp official, and the violent denunciations which filled almost every newspaper, the "radical" party amused itself with processions, effigy-burnings, riots and disturbances, which soon became a regular feature of American colonial life. In addition to these there began, apparently in New York and Boston, a movement to cut down consumption of British goods, and a regular propaganda in favor of those made in America. Agreements were entered into on every hand to use native products exclusively and to economize in every direction, especially, it may be noted, by curtailing the elaborate and expensive funeral ceremonies and decorations which had been fashionable until then among our ancestors. Organizations were formed to encourage home manufactures, and a strong spirit of what may be called economic patriotism was thus engendered throughout the colonies.

In all of this the New Yorkers naturally took an active interest; and though the "radical" party had been deprived of the pleasure of rabbling their own stamp-master, by his too prompt resignation, it soon found compensation for that. The stamp-master of Maryland, Hood, had not only been compelled to give up his office; he had been driven to seek refuge outside his colony, and came to New York in September. Ignorant of the local situation, he took up his residence in the one place which of all places he should not have chosen—the King's Arms Tavern, one of the headquarters of the New York "radicals"! His stay there was of

few days and full of trouble. As soon as his presence and identity were known, that party took steps to rid the place of so undesirable a citizen. Hood, "Afflicted," as he wrote, "with a Violent Feever & Ague," appealed first to General Gage, then to the acting governor, Colden, for protection and lodging, his landlady being afraid to keep him in her house. He sought refuge in the fort; but neither the governor's authority, nor the fear of the garrison, preserved him from his persecutors. The "radicals" compelled him to renounce his office again within the precincts of the fort, whence he finally sought refuge on Colden's farm on Long Island. Even there he was pursued for, as late as November, it was reported, "three hundred fellows embarked on the Ferry boats &c . . . to intimidate and persecute Mr. Zacharias Hud Stamp-master for Maryland now at Flushing." Thus having avenged their failure to amuse themselves with their own stamp-agent, they were further gratified by being formally thanked by their brethren in Baltimore a few months later for their activities against the stranger within their gates.

It is evident in the briefest recital of the Stamp Act riots which thus enlivened the summer of 1765 in the colonies, that they were not wholly due to a general and spontaneous ebullition of public sentiment against the Grenville policy. The manifestations in the various colonies were too much alike, the family resemblance between the doings in Massachusetts and Connecticut, New York and Philadelphia, was too close to admit of their explanation on the ground of the natural likeness of action of men moved by a similar impulse, or mere imitation of a common original. Still more, the sentiments expressed in widely separated districts were

too nearly of the same tenor to be explained by universal agreement of unconnected individuals. There seems to be no other ground for this extraordinary unanimity of speech and action than the existence of some concerted understanding among the elements by which they were expressed. The facts bear out this theory. There was an organization, then being perfected and coming into action, to which probably the greater part of these activities was due—the organization to which the Stamp Act had given a common purpose, and Barré a name—the Sons of Liberty.

What was the origin of this society; how far did it extend; what was its form of organization; and what were its purposes? The answers to these questions are by no means simple; and almost any general statement based on existing evidence would be subject to considerable exceptions in any given case. But in the main, making allowance for local conditions and the natural difficulties attending the discussion of an organization of such relatively indefinite and secret or semi-secret character, this much seems to be true. The new revolutionary body owed its membership in large measure to the various local organizations which, in many different forms, embodied the "radical" party throughout most, if not all, of the northern and certainly some of the southern colonies. One of these, in New Haven, would appear even to have been known as the Sons of Liberty as early as 1755.

The new organization seems to have made its first appearance in that region which first read Ingersoll's report of Barré's speech—eastern Connecticut. There, under the lead of Colonel Israel Putnam of Pomfret, ably seconded by the efforts of that New London faction which for thirty years

and under half a dozen names had disturbed the peace of the Connecticut governors, it spread rapidly through the hill country, supporting, and supported in turn by, similar elements in its nearest neighbors, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and reaching as far north as New Hampshire. It found less favor in western Connecticut; and it does not seem to have reached New York until the late summer, in August or September, 1765. Thence it spread in both directions, to Albany, where Isaac Sears not only fomented opposition in the Hudson River district, but invaded Connecticut to spread the gospel as far as Hartford; and, on the other side, southward to New Jersey, to Philadelphia, to Maryland, and thence, though with apparently decreasing force, still farther south, until it probably came to the limit of its influence in Charleston and the Cape Fear district, whither it seems to have been carried by a member of the New York organization.

Its purpose was clear. It opposed English administrative measures, especially taxation, and above all the Stamp Act. Like its predecessors, from which it was recruited, it took an active share in local and provincial affairs, supporting this candidate or that, like any other political machine. It established committees of correspondence to keep in touch with its chapters or clubs in other colonies, after the pattern set by the New York Assembly before the passage of the Act. It carried on an active propaganda in the press. It carried on a still more active agitation against the conservative, and especially the official, party in every colony into which it came. It was composed for the most part of those groups which under a variety of names and circumstances had previously been opposed to the dominance of the colonial aris-

tocracies, and which now, for the first time, found a general issue on which they could combine into a semblance of intercolonial organization, and it naturally took the tone and temper of its elements.

In the main it was made up of the working, unenfranchised, landless or moneyless class, with a sprinkling of lawyers, publishers, tradesmen, and merchants, especially those engaged in smuggling, like John Hancock of Boston and Benedict Arnold of New Haven. When John Adams went to the first meeting of this society which he attended in Boston—probably a meeting of its heads, or executive committee—he found that it was held in the counting-room of a distillery, and that it was attended by two distillers, a ship-captain, a printer and four mechanics. In Philadelphia the committee appointed to resist the introduction of the stamps was composed of five merchants, one lawyer, and one printer. And in New York, while it included merchants like Philip Livingston, and lawyers like John Morin Scott and William Smith, and agitators like Lamb, its chief membership may be judged by the fact that in later years it was transformed into a Mechanics Association, and that it was, in a sense, we are informed, the progenitor of Tammany Hall. If it was not precisely that, it is at least significant that the first meeting of the "Sons of St. Tammany" was held (on May 12, 1789) at Bardin's Tavern, which had been the meeting-place of the old body, and that it was composed of "middle and working class" men.

Such were the elements which composed this revolutionary organization. What was its history? It is impossible to go into the long and complicated story of its activities throughout the colonies, even were material available for

such a chronicle. Nor is that necessary, for the doings of such an organization are obvious from the nature of the case and of its character. The history of its career in one colony is, with such variations as are due to the different circumstances of the case, the history of all. That of the Sons of Liberty in New York is not only interesting in itself, it is characteristic of the whole movement; and it may be regarded as a type of the entire body in America.

Almost its first public appearance, as we have seen, was in connection with the adventure of the Maryland Stamp agent, Hood; and it is evident from its prompt and effective action in his case, that it must have been fairly well organized before that time. It met in the same place as the old Whig Club, which had been formed a dozen years before by Livingston, Scott, and the younger William Smith; and as these men became leaders in the new organization there seems to be presumptive evidence that it was an outgrowth of this group which had long directed the movements of the popular party; and there is much corroborative testimony which seems to bear this out.

It is easy for us now, more experienced in the ways of revolution, and wise in the event, to perceive that the Sons of Liberty was, or was destined to become, a revolutionary organization. It is easy to see that the growing antagonism between a stubborn administration in Great Britain and an equally stubborn opposition to it in America was certain to produce a collision. It was not so easy then. It is easy for us to see that, in its earlier stages at least, the movement which we call the American Revolution might be regarded as what later writers have called it, a civil war. It was impossible for men then to look at it in that light. The organization welded out of opposition groups was to its members merely

a means of getting their own way in local or imperial affairs, not, certainly to most of them, an engine of rebellion. But as the quarrel deepened and it appeared that they were not to have their way without the use of arms, they did not shrink from that, and the membership of this new body became the nucleus of a fighting force, as a century or more earlier the Eastern Counties Association had become the backbone of the armed resistance to Charles the First. But that event lay deep in the future; and the Sons of Liberty travelled a long and winding road, much broken and with many detours before they finally arrived at the parting of the ways between peace and war. In that progress they gained and lost members of their company; it changed its mind as well as its membership many times. But as it began, so, in the main, it ended—a body prepared to fight for its own interest.

What that interest was, it is not difficult to perceive. In New York, at least, the Sons of Liberty was, in the main, a mechanics' organization, supported by and supporting certain individuals of other classes, chiefly merchants and lawyers. It opposed the policy of the upper classes to resist the Stamp Act by stopping business, closing the courts and generally offering a "passive resistance" to the Act. It demanded "business as usual" and a more active, even a forcible, effort to render that act void; for it could not, as the upper classes could, afford stagnation of business. Beyond that it ventured, as time went on, into other realms of politics, till it presently became a power to be reckoned with in every aspect of public life in the city; and, above all, it became the fighting edge of the resistance to British power in any form.*

*See C. L. Becker, *History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776*, for a more detailed account of the political manœuvres and alignments in this period.

CHAPTER III

The Repeal of the Stamp Act

ALL revolutions, we are told, go through a certain regular cycle of development, of which the so-called "creation of a revolutionary atmosphere" by agitation and the stirring up of discontent is the first step; the development of an organization to that end a necessary factor; and an appeal to force the second move. To this the American Revolution is no exception; and by the summer of 1765 there was in existence the machinery which made possible widespread and tolerably uniform effort to nullify the Grenville proposals. In consequence this summer of 1765 saw the beginnings of activities in New York as in the other colonies in opposition to the English policy. The papers were filled with attacks upon that policy, so radical that they gave rise to the charge that they "pointed to independence." The charge had some basis of fact; for among those utterances was at least one to the effect that the colonists "demanded the rights of Englishmen, but if they were oppressed they would rebel and try to get better terms from some other power."

That there was more in this threat than empty words seemed evident to General Gage, then in command of the British forces in America, with headquarters in New York, and to lieutenant-governor Colden, the acting executive; for those officials promptly collected a battalion to man the fort, and begged Captain Kennedy of the *Coventry,* then lying

in the harbor, for a force of sailors; so that by the first of September the administration was prepared for an outbreak. None the less the authorities acted with extreme moderation, as their conduct in the matter of Hood demonstrated —a moderation so pronounced as to give rise to a suspicion of weakness on their part. They were, indeed, under great provocation, for a "seditious" pamphlet attacking the government, the *Constitutional Courant,* printed at Woodbridge, New Jersey, was in those same weeks of September hawked about the streets in spite of the efforts of the Governor and Council to suppress it. This was supplemented on October 17 by a notice in *The Gazette* calling a meeting of the "friends of liberty and the English Constitution" to form an "association of all who were not already slaves, in opposition to all attempts to make them such."

In this, as in other like circumstances in the summer and fall of 1765, the hand of the new organization was perceived; and if there was wanting further proof of its strength and policy, it was soon given. For the *Constitutional Courant* revived a motto first seen a decade before, and now converted to the uses of the revolutionary party, "Join or Die"; and on that principle the "radicals" began to act. On the 6th of June, James Otis had suggested to the Massachusetts Assembly the summoning of a colonial congress to consider the new acts of Parliament. The "seminal principle of subsequent union," that it was "highly expedient there should be a meeting of committees from the houses of representatives or burgesses in the several colonies . . . to consult together on the present circumstances of the colonies" was adopted. Otis, with two colleagues, was appointed by the Assembly to represent Massachusetts in such a body if

it should be assembled, and letters were despatched to the other provincial assemblies requesting them to join in the movement. To this there was assent; and plans for the meeting were laid. The date was fixed for the first Tuesday in October, the place decided on was New York; and on that day there met accordingly some twenty-eight delegates representing nine colonies. The New York representatives were the members of the committee of correspondence chosen by the New York Assembly a year earlier—the mayor, John Cruger; Leonard Lispenard; William Bayard; and the two Livingstons, Philip and Robert.

The Stamp Act Congress met in the City Hall and sat for three weeks, deliberating on the situation and the policy of America. It attracted but little public attention; it is probable that it desired none. The published notices of its meetings are relatively scanty for such a momentous event; but its conclusions were none the less—perhaps the more—important for that. It proposed to insist on the repeal of all acts laying duties on trade, as well as to demand the withdrawal of the Stamp Act. Its more radical members discouraged the policy of petitioning Parliament, but they were overruled and the Congress prepared an address which renounced the idea of representation in the English Parliament, suggested by Grenville; repudiated Britain's right to tax the colonies; and declared that colonial aid was to be given, if at all, by the colonial legislatures as a free gift—and this memorial was ordered to be transmitted to Parliament.

It can hardly be said that the Stamp Act Congress was wholly the product of the Sons of Liberty although it contained members of that organization. But even as it pursued

its deliberations there was being prepared outside the walls of the City Hall a movement expressing more directly the peculiar qualities of the society then coming into active participation in colonial affairs. For while the Congress debated, the time for the arrival of the stamps approached, and popular resentment, failing direct encouragement from the Congress, sought means of its own to accomplish what it was evident that body would be unable to achieve. As early as August, Mr. James McEvers had advised the acting governor that "Since the Late Riott at Boston & the Inflamatory Papers lately printed in the Colonies, People of this City are so Incens'd against me as a Distributor of Stamps for this Province that I find it will be Attended with the greatest Risque of my Person and Fortune, to Attempt & indeed impossible for me to execute the Office to Prevent the same Cruel Fate Mr. Oliver met with at Boston . . . from the Information I have had that if I had Attempted it, my House would have been Pillag'd, my Person Abused"—so he resigned.

Consciousness of possible danger had impelled Governor Colden to suggest to General Gage that he might be in need of troops; to which Gage replied that though his forces were so scattered he would try to get some together if he had sufficient notice, but it must be understood that they were "wholy and soley in obedience to the Civil Power." All this Colden laid before his Council in the first week of September; but that body assured him that it was of the "opinion that the Inhabitants of this City, having discovered the utmost Detestation and abhorrence at the late riotous Proceedings in Boston and other places, there is no reason to apprehend they are in the least disposed to Countenance any Riot

or Tumult here. That the Number of Troops at present in Garrison is sufficient for the Defence of the Fort; and that it will be more safe for the Government to shew a Confidence in the People, than to discover its distrust of them by Calling in any assistance to the Civil Power"—especially since no more than two hundred troops could be had and it would take two or three weeks to get even that many together.

They were the more confirmed in this since the Mayor and magistrates of the city assured the Governor and Council that "the Magistrates having lately made particular Inquiry as to the Temper and Disposition of the People in their respective Wards, and finding in them the highest Detestation of what has happened in Boston and other places" were of the same opinion. Which, in view of the events of the ensuing months, seems to indicate that the authorities of New York were as much out of touch with the ideas of their constituents as they have been at various times since.

For, as if to give point to their protest, while the members of the Stamp Act Congress were putting the last touches on their petition to Parliament, the *Edward,* convoyed by the *Coventry* and the *Garland* frigates, arrived in the harbor on October 22 with ten bundles of stamps, welcomed by a mob of two thousand, assembled on the Battery to prevent their being landed. The next day Colden and his Council called McEvers in and asked whether he would take charge of these dangerous documents—"To which the said James McEvers replyed in the Negative." The day following it was resolved by the Council, which sat daily in this difficult time, to unload the stamps by means of the Albany sloop; as otherwise it could not be accomplished without

too great "Risque"; and, under cover of night, they were transferred to the fort.

What that "Risque" was, events meanwhile in the city evidenced. On the news of the arrival of the stamps, the city had been decorated by the patriot party with flags—at half-mast; and when the Governor had prevailed upon the commander of the *Garland* to lend him a detail of his crew to bring the stamps ashore, the radicals began to move. They placarded the city with posters which read:

PRO PATRIA

The first Man that either distributes or makes use of Stampt Paper let him take Care of His House, Person and Effects.

Vox Populi.

WE DARE.

Various people put on mourning for the "Interment of their liberty," and the spirit of opposition even "Descended to the Bag-gammon Boxes at the merchant's Coffee House being covered with Black and the Dice in Crape," as Captain Montresor noted in his diary.

Under such circumstances on the 25th of October—the anniversary of the accession of George III as it happened—the Stamp Act Congress held its last session. The members began to leave for their homes, and the stage was cleared for the next scene in the drama, purposely in all probability, for it would not do to have the Congress in session if trouble should break out.

And trouble was due to break out. The Stamp Act was scheduled to go into effect on the first day of November,

1765. On the day before, the governors of the various colonies, Colden among them, took oath to carry it into effect; though it is probable that each one of them did so with silent reservations; and it is certain that none of them ever carried out his pledge. In New York the harassed executive, unwilling to provoke disturbance, yet determined to do all he could to prevent the destruction of the stamps, took every means to protect them and to avoid trouble. As early as September 6 he had received a copy of the report of Montresor to General Gage respecting the measures necessary to strengthen the fort which some years before had been declared absolutely indefensible on the landward side. Two companies of artillery under a certain Major James formed the garrison, which was equipped with some small cannon and proper shot and shells.

Major James was a soldier, impatient of popular sentiment, especially when expressed in the form of mobs, opposed to the pretensions and practices of the "patriot" party, and with an unfortunate propensity for expressing opinions beyond the strict limits of his military duties. Some six weeks later when he was examined before the House of Commons for the events in New York he was accused of having "threatened to cram the Stamps down their Throats with the End of my Sword—2nd, If they attempted to rise I would drive them all out of the Town for a pack of Rascals with four and twenty men—3rd, That I had in Contempt to the Gentlemen thrown an Almanack into the Fire that had not been stampt—4th, That I had turned some Ladies and Gentlemen off the Ramparts of Fort George because they should not see the Works I was carrying on—5th, That I had been over Officious in my Duty." To all of which, as he says, "I answer'd in the Affirmative."

Burns's Coffee House, on Broadway Opposite the Bowling Green.
From a lithograph by A. Weingartner, published in *Valentine's Manual* for 1858.

Strong words beget strong words; and the radical leaders retorted that they would seize the fort, burn the stamps and "bury Major James alive."

In such spirit New York approached the fatal first of November; and it is perhaps fortunate that the fire-eaters on either side were unable to carry out their generous intentions toward each other. The last day of October, 1765, was a momentous twenty-four hours in colonial history, and nowhere more so than in New York, where it saw the beginning of an important movement in the progress of revolution. On that day there met at George Burns' City Tavern the merchants of the city to the number of two hundred, who adopted resolutions not to ship orders unless the Stamp Act was repealed; to cancel all outstanding orders in England; and not to sell goods from that source on commission after January 1, 1766, unless the obnoxious Act was repealed before that time—which seemed at least improbable.

What was still more significant, they appointed a committee, consisting of Isaac Sears, John Lamb, William Wiley, and Thomas Robinson, to communicate with similar bodies in other colonies; and thus gave fresh impetus to the movement set on foot earlier in establishing what was to become one of the most active and important agencies of revolution, and of colonial union, the committees of correspondence. The retailers, on their part, agreed not to buy English goods after the first of January; and a mass-meeting of mechanics and tradesmen, not to be outdone, held a session in the Fields, and formed a procession which took them down Broadway to the fort, and then past the City Arms, to encourage the protesters, and to threaten the upholders of British authority.

Such were the preliminaries of the event which was to

mark New York's entry into the revolutionary struggle. The action of the popular party, in particular, foreboded trouble to the authorities; and on their part they took precautions to meet any possible emergency. In anticipation of violence, the sailors came ashore, the governor summoned the aid of the marines on the *Coventry,* and the fort was put in a posture of defense. All this seemed to promise action, and it was noted that the country people from round about came into the city in considerable numbers to witness the spectacle of a clash between the government forces and the mob, in lively anticipation of pleasurable excitement. Meanwhile the town was posted by the "radical" party with inflammatory placards, one of which was affixed to the very gate of the fort.

But, contrary to every expectation, nothing happened during the day. The sailors were balked of their fight, the country-folk of their spectacle; and it began to seem as evening came on that the whole thing would end as it began, in talk. That, as it happened, however, was not the case; for what the day lacked the night provided. Of what occurred then there is no better account than that of an eyewitness, who happened to be in the city and described his own experiences in a letter which, however incorrect in some details, has preserved much of the fine flavor of the time.*

"Having come down from Claverack through the Way Gate," he says, "like Hell out of a great gun—a sea term—and being just now in high spirits full of Old Madeira," he tells this story.

"The first day of Nov'r our City seem'd to be very dis-

*"New York during the American Revolution . . . Original Papers." Mercantile Library Association, New York, 1861, pp. 41 ff.

turbed but did not do much by Reason that they did not know wether the stamps took place the first or second day the first Evening there rais'd a Wonderfull Large Mob but Did no damage by Reason of the uncertainty the 2nd Day we heard that the Governor was design'd to distribute the stamps he sent for the soldiers from tortoise bay he Planted the Canon Against the City he fixt the Cowhorns with musket balls 2 Cannon was Planted Against the Fort Gate for fear the Mob should Break in Loded with Grape shot, he ordered the Canon of the Batery to be spiked up for fear the Mob should Come so far as to Break out a Civil war And nock down the fort Major James had said never fear for I (could) drive N York with 500 Artillery Soldiers he Placed Soldiers at the Gaol to Prevent the Mobs Letting out the Prisoners he Ordered 15 Artillery Soldiers at his house near the Coledge where Black Sam Formerly dwelled and the rest of the soldiers he kept in the fort in readiness for an Ingagement In the Evening the Citizens begin to muster about the streats About 7 in the Evening I heard A Great Hozaing Near the broadway I ran that way with a number of Others where the Mob just began they had an Ephogy of the Governor made of Paper which sat on an old Chair which A Seaman Carried Upon his head the Mob went from the Fields down the Fly hozaing at Every Corner with Amassen sight of Candles

the Mob went from thence to Mr. Maccivers who was appointed for stamp Master in London Since he did not Except it they Honor'd him with 8 Hozaurs from thence they went to the fort that the Governor might see his Ephogy if he dare sho his face the Mob gave several whozaus and thretened the Officers upon the wall Particularly

Major james for saying he'd drive N York with 500 Men Now 'tis said that the Governor was A Drummer in the Army at Scotland the Mob had Assurance Enough to break open the Governors Coatch house and took his Coatch from under the mussle of the Canon they Put the Ephogy upon the Coatch one sat up for Coatchman with the Whip in his hand whilst Others drawed it About the town down to the Coffy House the Merchants was Exceedingly Pleas'd And the mob still increasing from thence. . . . with About 5 or 600 Candles to alight them

it was a dark night and not A Breath of Wind I ran down to the Fort to hear what they said as the Mob Came down it made a Butifull Appearance And as soon As Major james saw them I hear'd him say from off the wals—Hear they Come by G-d As soon As the Mob see the fort they Gave three Chears and Came down to the Fort they went under the Cannon which was planted A Gainst them with Grape shot, they bid a Soldier upon the wals, to tell the rebel drummer or Major James to Give orders to fire they placed the Gallows Against the fort Gate and took Clubs and beat A Gainst it And there Gave three Whozaus in defyance they then Concluded to Burn these Ephogy and the Governors Coatch in the Boldengren before there eyes

they told M James as soon as the Coatch was burnt they would knock down his house . . . and if he was A Man he should Go and defend it. the Ladys fainted as they Could not Go on Board. . . . Then the Mob gave three Chairs and went to Major Jameses And drove the Soldiers out the Back way then with one Consent they began upon the house and in Less than 10 Minutes they had the windows and dores the Looking Glasses Mehogany Tables Silk

Curtains A Libiry of Books all the China and furniture the feather Beds they cut and threw about the streets and burnt books and tore the Garden drank 3 or 4 Pipes of wine destroyed the Beef throo the butter about and at last burnt the whole only one red Silk Curtain they kept for A Colour The 3 day they was resolf'd to have the Governor Ded or Alive The fort got up the Fashions in order for Battle And the mob began before dark the Governor sent for His Councel which held about 2 Hours whilst thousands stood by ready waiting for the word the Gov'r concluded and promised faithfully to have nothing to do with the stamps and he would send them back to London with Capt Davis —all Peacable all the mob went home every man back to his home."

Among them the writer of this letter, who, it is evident, had the time of his life and a good story to tell all his days, finally sought his lodging. His account, making allowance for the spirits—of various sorts—under whose influence it was written, and the fact that, despite his obvious desire and his great activity, he missed the assembling of the crowd in the Fields is, in the main, correct. He hints at the second effigy, which was that of Governor Colden on a gallows, with a boot over one shoulder and the devil over the other —a reminiscence of the fancy of the London mob some years before in its attack upon Lord Bute—and at the succeeding events which brought this outbreak of violence to an end. But he was so excited that he apparently never noticed that all this time the church bells tolled steadily from nine-thirty on.

Childish as the whole performance may seem, it had its effect. On the evening of the riot and on the day follow-

ing, as our correspondent intimates, Colden's life was threatened, and it was reported and apparently believed that the mob intended to attack the fort and burn the stamps. But the more respectable and peaceable element, R. R. Livingston, Duane, and others, went through the town persuading men to abandon their purpose, and finally succeeded in checking the formation of another mob in the Fields. The Governor summoned his Council on Saturday morning and again that afternoon, when they took an eminently cautious course—and passed it on! No instructions or bill of lading had accompanied the stamps nor any authentic copy of the Act of Parliament, and they took advantage of this fortunate circumstance to resolve that the acting governor had no authority to appoint a stamp distributor or distribute them himself, but should leave it to Sir Henry Moore, the new governor, then daily expected. Governor Colden, no doubt with much relief, agreed not to issue the stamps, and placards were circulated to that effect; while as further evidence of his good faith the guns on the Battery and in the Artillery yard were spiked, though the little garrison was kept under arms and the gate barricaded.

Still the more violent leaders were not satisfied. A notice was posted at the Coffee House signed by the "Sons of Neptune," urging the mob to attack the fort on Tuesday. The master of the *Edward* fled for his life, and the Governor's family took refuge on the *Coventry*. On Monday the Governor again agreed in the presence of the Mayor not to issue the stamps; and that agreement was witnessed by Mayor John Cruger, R. R. Livingston, Beverly Robinson, and John Stevens, in behalf of the citizens. The agreement was published; but still the radicals were not satisfied, for

Colden still retained the stamps. Accordingly on Tuesday another meeting was called in the Fields, and to this men were asked to come armed. The mob assembled; but the Governor and Council who meanwhile had held another meeting, finally, after consulting with General Gage, and finding Captain Kennedy as unwilling to receive the stamps on his ship as the General was unwilling to precipitate civil war, gave way. The stamped paper was delivered to the mayor and aldermen who receipted for it, agreed to be responsible for its value and took it to the City Hall, accompanied by some thousands of people.

With this final surrender the incident was virtually closed. The Governor's family returned; Major James sailed for England on November 8, bearing the official accounts of the outbreak; and advertisements of "Peace proclaimed" were posted through the town. On November 15 the new governor, Sir Henry Moore, arrived with a fresh consignment of stamped paper; which promptly followed its predecessor into oblivion; for though he offered to issue it, none dared accept it and for the moment in New York, as elsewhere, the Stamp Act riots died down, except, as Montresor wrote, for "Children who nightly trampouze the streets . . . and hallowing."

This was not quite the end of the incident. Fort George was dismantled; Mr. Peter De Lancey was compelled to resign his post as stamp-master for Canada, Nova Scotia and New Hampshire; and Governor Moore called in Isaac Sears to concert measures for preserving peace. The Lieutenant-Governor was sharply censured for his weak conduct by the King. James and Colden were reimbursed for their losses; the Assembly undertook the charge for unspik-

ing the cannon; and the stamps, apparently, after a period of storage in New York, were mostly shipped back to England.

But one circumstance can hardly be omitted. It is a bill rendered to Colden in May of the following year by Elliott and Jacob, the great coach-makers of London—and presumably paid by the Province—for a "Chariot and Furniture" to the following effect:

"A New Post Chariot made of the Best Seasond timber lin'd with a light colourd Cloth trimmd with a Near Coffoy laice & a Handsome folding Hammock cloth with 2 rows of fringe 2 fore Glasses Door Glasses and a sett of mahogany shutters with rose lights the Glass [doors?] . . . & Holders Coffoy & pockets to the fore end & Doors lin'd with leather a Nett to the roof an Additional seat with iron work to take off or on a Wainscoat Box with a lock a Carpet to the bottom steps to slide under with brass handles, Painted a fine Glaizd Crimson with light Crimson flowers on silver all over the Pannels & Gold Ciphers with proper colourd flowers twisting round them and Gilding the Ogees and Beads and Varnished—and a Neat Carriage with iron Axletrees and Good Seasond Wheels a Post Budget a sett of Bow Ess steel springs & Colourd and Varnishd Vermillion and a New Pair of Harness Bridles & ranes sewd white & Ornamented with Brass pieces & Ciphers engravd on the Howsings and all things Completed to the Chariot & Harness in the Best manner . . . £90.0.0"

So that, all things considered, when the Lieutenant-Governor rode abroad thereafter in this miracle of coach-work he must have had a certain suspicion that his anxious week had not been wholly without its little compensations after all.

It would be too much to expect that after such great disturbances New York would sink into the quiet routine of existence. Nor was this the case; and it so happens that by a curious chance there has been preserved the diary of a certain Captain John Montresor, an engineer officer then stationed in New York which provides us with a day to day account of the events of this exciting Stamp Act period. He was not an unprejudiced witness; he disapproved of the mob violence of the Sons of Liberty, "openly defying powers, office and all authority." But perhaps for that very reason he observes more carefully those manifestations almost from week to week; and after an account of the Stamp Act riots which he describes in full, his narrative is the best we have of the ensuing months.*

Throughout December, 1765, he notes the placards posted in the town with special interest—some "to hunt, as with hounds, John Coghill Knap a lawyer interloped among them"; others merely "seditious," or "libellous and rebellious." He chronicles the efforts of Sir Henry Moore to discover the author of the false rumor that he "had advised the officers of the men-of-war to seize the vessels cleared with unstampt paper." In particular he describes the demonstration of December 17, when "about 8 o'clock the Effigies of Lord Colville, Mr. Grenville and General Murray were paraded several times through the streets amidst a large concourse of people who halted where the Governor was in company and gave 3 hussas, they were carried to the Common and there burnt. Their numerous attendants, the Mob, were furnished all with Candles which they forced from the Houses as they went along, threatening to set them on fire if they refused."

*Collections of the New York Historical Society for 1881.

Two days later he writes that "An officer and 40 Militia and a Magistrate nightly guard the Stamp papers. 35 of the Guard out of the 40 voted to burn the Stamps"; and on the next day "Assembled a Mob for Householders' votes—yea or Nay, to burn the Stamps or send them back to England. Undetermined." The 24th he writes "A mob collected to destroy Captain Kennedy's house but suppressed by the Mayor. A Finesse to frighten him. . . . Mob employed in making Effigies to carry around the last day of this year. Ten vessels have escaped with unstampt clearings." Christmas Day was celebrated that year by a proposal to the Governor "to issue a proclamation offering the post of Stamp Master . . . to whoever will accept it. (They knowing no one dare without immediately risking his life.) If not obtained, then to give them Passess, as he might be indemnified they protesting . . . that no Stamps can be had."

On December 31st he notes "Advertisements placarded at the Merchants' Coffee House threatening the effects and even the persons of the Captains of the Ships of War should they dare to detain or even bring to any Vessel sailing from this Port without Stampt paper. . . . This night the Mob here proposed burning the Commr^r^ in Chief here in effigy, but effectual Measures were taken to prevent such an Insult by the General and officers assembling together for the evening & the Troops here had their orders accordingly which frustrated their insolent Design."

The new year began inauspiciously for peace. "Several Placards threatening the Effects &c of the two Captains of the Stationed Ships" appeared on January 1st. On the 3rd the Custom house opened again; and the Deputy Secretary of the province refusing to do without stamped papers, the

mob again stirred the resentment; though for the moment nothing happened. By January 14th there was another grievance—that of the sailors of the vessels laid up for the winter being permitted to work in the dockyards and "lower the price of workmanship." From the fact that he records the Governor having "lectured the Mayor and magistracy relating to the Mob burning the Stamps the other night," it would appear that at least some of the offending papers were destroyed; and the Governor's threat to appeal to General Gage for troops was met by advertisements in the Merchants' Coffee House "defying what cloth soever to interfere towards inforcing the stamps." It further appears from his story that the "Sons of Liberty assembled . . . in the Fields and bespoke a very large supper, but upon some disagreement (which is generally the case) they broke up and dispersed as soon as it came on the table leaving only half a dozen," that though they were united in opposing the officials, they were not wholly agreed among themselves in other respects.

On January 28th there arrived thirteen more packages of stamped paper, "which were by the Mayor and Corporation secured and lodged in the city Hall for reasons"—which it appears were that the Sons of Liberty agreed that "on the first accounts that arrive from England of their Resolution of Endorsing the Stamp act in America, they will destroy the Stamp papers," both in the City Hall and the Fort. "From the present crisis," he adds, "if we may judge of the Loyalty of most people here, they acknowledge the King but not the power of Parliament. Declaring that our Legislature cannot impose any Internal Taxation on them as they are not represented. . . . Nor do they choose it, it seems."

February 3rd he writes of a "Meeting of the Libertines who seem to decline, being much concerned that the Gentlemen of Fortune in the town don't publicly join them. They formed a Committee for correspondence with the Liberty Boys of the neighbouring provinces"; and, a little later, "The Sons of Liberty (who have the sole regulation of the licentious press here) declare that they will fight up to their knees in blood rather than suffer the Stamp act to be put in force and if they can assist in any other."

On February 14th there seemed prospect of further disturbances, when news came from Philadelphia that passes had been issued in New York on stamped paper and "bonds signed by Mr. Charles Williams to Mr. Pintard upon which they assembled headed by Messrs. All[icoc]ke, La[m]b, and Se[a]rs, as Counsellors who proceeded to these Gentlemen's houses and made a great riot . . . the first instance of this licentiousness in open daylight." The next morning the accused were "carried to the Common with an intent of being pilloried but through the intercession of the clergy . . . they were allowed only to make their concessions first there, and after being conducted to their Houses to repeat it. The two General Officers for this day were Tony & Daly two ship carpenters who it seems, as well as some others can either raise or suppress a Mob instantly. No Houses were pulled down owing to some Gentlemen present and as Mr. Williams's belonged to Mr. Delancey."

On February 24th Colonel Putnam of Connecticut advised the New York Sons of Liberty that he would assist with militia to prevent the enforcement of the Stamp Act; and apparently encouraged by this, Montresor reports them as declaring "that in case orders should arrive for Enforcing

the Stamp act to seize all the Officers of the Crown and embark them for England"; that "they are for shaking off the Yoke of Dependency." So Governor Moore "bought and wears two Homespun Coats made in the Colonies . . . for an Example to others"; despite which from time to time "Lieut. Governor Colden's life was daily threatened by the Sons of Liberty." As an aftermath of the riots, Captain Conner arrived to supersede Captain Kennedy for his refusal to accept the stamps; and a few days later the Sons of Liberty sent Mr. Allicocke and Mr. Sears on board the *Garland* to demand its lieutenant, Mr. Hallam, for having said that if the publisher of the *Gazette,* Mr. Holt, had been in England he would be hanged; the mob meanwhile shouting from the wharf near where the ship lay, "Bring the Lieut. ashore with a Halter about his neck." Mr. Hallam refused to speak to them or to sign a denial of his remark and the next day—the 20th of February—the crowd assembled prepared to attack the vessel, if he was not delivered up. The commander-in-chief offered assistance to the ships; the men-of-war received powder and cartridges and when on the day following the Sons of Liberty assembled they found the ships prepared and contented themselves with demanding from the commander-in-chief his reasons for sending such messages to the men-of-war and ordering troops to New York, and threatening to pull down the house of the major who carried the message to the ships.

In view of these events in New York, which were paralleled in many other places, especially in Boston, it was apparent that, as one American leader observed, if England did not repeal the Stamp Act, America would. In fact America did. It was in vain that British ships stopped ves-

sels which ventured to sail without stamped clearance papers. That expedient was found likely to produce serious consequences, and was presently given up. But the Stamp Act had done more damage than even the irritation of the ship-masters indicated. It had roused the animosity of the two most vocal elements of society—the lawyers and the publishers. Among these latter the editor of the *New London Gazette,* who had first printed Barré's speech, took the lead.

"As the people of these colonies," he wrote on October 25, 1765, "are fully convinced of the fatal consequences attending a compliance with the Stamp Act,—the deplorable and abject conditions to which it will inevitably reduce them,—it may seem injurious to imagine, that the inhabitants of this colony will ever betray a character so utterly inconsistent with the spirit which ought to actuate the noble Sons of Liberty, as ever to submit to become purchasers of any of the Stamped Papers, and thereby manifest their acquiescence in an act of the most dangerous tendency, indisputably subversive of our inestimable rights, and calculated to reduce us, together with millions yet unborn, to irredeemable slavery, and the most abject poverty."*

Nor was he content with this. After the most approved manner of modern propaganda, he used his news columns —with appropriate comment—to spread the new gospel; as witness this typical despatch:

"PHILADELPHIA, December 12.

By the Captains Reese and Davidson, who arrived last week from Barbados, we learn, that the inhabitants of that island, have tamely submitted to the loss of their LIBERTY

*Page 3, column 2, *New London Gazette,* Friday, Oct. 25, 1765.

and PROPERTY, by a favorable acceptance of the STAMPED PAPERS. Some bills of loading are already come from thence, marked with the BRAND OF OPPRESSION.—Had one spark of the spirit of LIBERTY existed in that island, certainly the many noble examples lately set by the SONS OF LIBERTY, in these northern climes, would have roused it to action, and not suffered those people by their pusilanimity to draw on the resentment of their fellow sufferers."*

The Stamp Act and the ensuing disturbances, indeed, produced a minor revolution in the newspaper world. The authorities demanded that newspapers should be printed on stamped paper. But, after a brief period of indecision—in some cases with no intermission at all—the papers appeared as usual, sometimes taking pains to note that they were not printed on stamped paper because no such paper was to be had, sometimes not even troubling to do that. In some cases they printed ironic comment, like that of the Philadelphia paper which in noting the execution of a murderer added, "He will never pay any of the taxes unjustly laid on these once happy lands"—a sentiment to which he could hardly have been suspected to subscribe with any gratitude.

In the unlicensed and uncensored New York papers as elsewhere the controversy raged. "Cato" poured out his solid columns of fine print to engage "Cassandra's" small pica, "Patriot" replied to "Citizen," "Vox Populi" strove valiantly with "Crassus" or "Cratus," as historical or mythological or even

*_New London Gazette,_ Friday, Dec. 27, 1765, page 1, volume 2, and page 2, column 1.

mythical heroes unsheathed their huge, blunt weapons of controversy and deep dulness answered unto deep across the front pages of these ancient sheets. So far, indeed, from limiting their activities, the Stamp Act began a golden age for publishers, from whose presses poured not merely their journals but a stream of pamphlets almost from week to week, attacking, defending, expounding, explaining, their writers' reasons for taking the sides they did.

It was in vain that the courts were required to use the stamped paper; for the courts no longer sat in many colonies, but met and adjourned, met and adjourned, until the obnoxious act should be repealed. When they did such business as could not be avoided, they ignored or evaded the use of stamps. In every colony the resistance, active or passive, was effectual; and little by little the stamps found their way back to England, or to a more violent fate in America.

Yet it would be too much to assume that the rioting through this winter of 1765–6 was due wholly to political motives. The stoppage of business owing to the uncertainty of the situation had made things hard for the laboring classes which composed the bulk of the Sons of Liberty; and their manifestations were directed as much toward forcing the merchants to "put business in motion again with or without stamps," as to prevent the execution of the Act. In fact the alternatives seem to have appeared to them, to be "either to violate the act, or to submit to it," but in any case to get on with the resumption of trade, for "the half-way measures of the wealthy merchants won't work." They even charged the better element with actually recommending the cessation of business as a shrewd way of getting the Act enforced in the end while seeming to oppose it. Nor were the

lawyers less disturbed. Many of them doubtless felt like John Adams, who wrote that just as he was on the point of winning a competence, the execrable Stamp Act came to "threaten my ruin as well as that of America in general." Unless the courts were soon opened the Act, he feared, would make "a large chasm in my affairs."

It is apparent, even from Montresor's account, that what is often called "the better element" took small part or none in the riotous proceedings of 1765–6, despite the Captain's observation that "The lawyers are Deemed by the people here to be the Hornets and Firebrands of the Constitution; the Planners and Incendiaries of the present Rupture." It is no less evident that while the mercantile and professional classes took little or no part in the disturbances, they were not wholly unsympathetic with them as a means of opposing what many even of the most loyal regarded as an unwise and an unfair policy toward America. It is equally apparent that when that policy had been wrecked by this resistance, they aligned themselves again with the forces of order in opposition to rioting as a normal state of existence in New York or elsewhere.

Faced with this joint opposition of officials and merchants the Sons of Liberty appear to have lost something of their strength even in New York. Two circumstances combined with the fear of the propertied classes and their desire to resume business to deprive the organization of its chief reason for existence. The first was the conciliatory attitude of the new governor, Moore; the second was the course of events in England. There the Stamp Act disturbances had reacted sharply. The ships returning with their stamps and their reports had greatly affected public, and even official, opinion.

Though the petition of the Stamp Act Congress was not formally received by Parliament, it found much sympathy and able supporters there, and was, in fact, twice read in the Commons. Evidence was taken of the riots, especially those in Rhode Island and New York. The Rockingham ministry, which had meanwhile succeeded that of Grenville in July 1765, adhered to the policy of the Act, but it became evident that a change impended; and events soon indicated what direction that change would take.

The examination of Benjamin Franklin on February 13, 1766, in a sense marked the beginning of the new course. A week later the ministry settled the terms of the repeal, to which even Charles Townshend acceded. The next day that proposal was introduced into the House, where it received the support of Pitt and Burke. On the 22nd of February the Act was repealed by a majority of more than a hundred votes—a result achieved, it was said, principally through the efforts of the merchants and tradespeople who thronged the lobbies and clamorously demanded that the Americans be restored to a condition in which they would be willing to buy British goods. At almost precisely the same moment Richard Henry Lee was organizing in his own county of Westmoreland in Virginia, the first "Association," whose members agreed not to import any goods from England until the Act was withdrawn, thus forging another weapon for America's resistance to the English policy. Franklin, who had been accused of having suggested the Stamp Act, became the hero of its repeal. Pennsylvania reappointed him as her agent; in 1768 Georgia followed suit, followed in turn by New Jersey and Massachusetts, so that he became a kind of ambassador of America to Great Britain. From the first

he had urged his fellow countrymen to "express their gladness in such a way that the enemies of America might derive neither aid nor comfort from it."

Rumors of repeal grew with the advance of spring. Almost from day to day came messages, first that the Stamp Act had been repealed, then that it had not, and spirits rose and fell accordingly. That the officials were alarmed was evidenced by the transfer of powder and arms to the men-of-war for safety; and there are continual notices of collisions between the Sons of Liberty and the soldiers. On April 4th there appears to have been held a solemn conclave to determine whether the Sons of Liberty would permit a band of "strollers" to accept the Governor's permission to act. They are reported to declare that if the Stamp Act is repealed "they will insist on all Restrictions of Trade being taken off. No Post Offices nor Courts of Admiralty, as being all infringements on the subject." "Upon the news from England . . . arriving relating to the apparent probability of the Repeal of the Stamp act and Mr. Pitt's speech, one Swinney, an inflammatory news-carrier and monger, galloped on Horse Back through the Street crying Pitt and no King, till meeting with an English Butcher who silenced him."

Then on April 25th and 26th came the great news. "Came up by the Skiff of a Pilot Boat an account that the Duke of Cumberland Packet Boat, Captain Goodrich from Falmouth was arrived within Sandy Hook and brought advices that the Stamp Act was repealed. Immediately the Intelligencer from the Skiff had a collection made for him by the Coffee house. Many streets were illuminated and squibs and firing of muskets ensued and Captain Sears a principal Ringleader

of the Sons of Liberty went to the Rector and the several Ministers of the places of worship here to order them to ring their Bells at 3 o'clock the next morning . . . Mr. Pitt's speech published at large and highly applauded by the Sons of Liberty. 26th. At 3 o'clock this morning all the Bells of the place rung and having no peal made a most hideous Din. About 8 o'clock a.m. the Captain of the Packet arrived with the mail in his Boat and was demanded by the Sons of Liberty before he came ashore whether the Stamp act was repealed—he answered in the affirmative, adding Totally. Upon which they fixed him in a chair and carried him and the mail to the Post Office with great acclamations of joy, cheering him all the way. The bells still ringing.

"However upon further enquiry and the Examination of the letters from London of the latest date they found that the Repeal had not undergone the 3rd reading in the House of Commons, but had succeeded in the 2 former readings only. The Bells were immediately silenced and great discontent ensued owing to their having been so premature in their rejoicings." Next day the Sons of Liberty forbade any one to bring lamb to market or eat it under penalty of "having the offender's house pulled down"; and on the 5th of May they "pulled down the play house at the beginning of the 2nd act" of the play authorized by the Governor, "put out all the lights, then began the picking of pockets, stealing watches, throwing Brick Bats, sticks and Bottles and Glasses, crying out Liberty, Liberty, then proceeded to the Fields or Commons and burnt the materials."

Finally on May 20th arrived "by the way both of Boston and Philadelphia an account of the Repeal of the Stamp act, Westminster March 18th, being the day his Majesty

gave his assent. The hideous Din of the Several Single Bells was immediately demonstrated upon the Occasion and hundreds of Boys running through the streets with poles upon which were hoisted Handkerchiefs, papers &c in imitation of the late Mob, attended with repeated Huzzas.—Various papers published by the several printers; crying Glorious news for America and no more Shim Shams."

The next day "All the Bells set a ringing again as soon as daylight appeared. One o'clock—21 guns were fired off of Skids in the Fields to Salute General Allicocke, . . . two large bonfires were constructed, one for the Sons of Liberty and one for the Corporation. . . . And a Holliday throughout the Town, Shops shut &c—Bills printed for the Rejoicings placarded through the town, a large Board fixed on the Flag Staff—George 3rd, Pitt, and Liberty—the Inscription. A Grand illumination throughout the city excepting where the officers, military and naval resided. Night ended in Drunkenness, throwing of Squibbs, Crackers, firing of muskets and pistols, breaking some windows and forcing off the Knockers off the Doors. A large Mob of the Sons of Liberty went to the Fort to congratulate the Governor, three of which, drunk as they were, had admittance. . . . Service on the occasion in Trinity Church. Sons of Liberty quarrelled in their Procession regarding the precedency, who should be greatest. Clergy of the Church of England presented an address to the Governor by the president of the Convention in the name of the whole."

"Four days later arrived the *Hind* with Major James as a passenger bringing confirmation of the repeal and further ease to the American trade, and the next day the Sons of Liberty purpose, now the act is repealed, Divesting them-

selves of their Home spun clothes, and supposed only to remain with Homespun hearts." Presently the "cryer went about Repealing the Lamb act, giving the inhabitants leave to eat Lamb by Permission of the Sons of Liberty."

Then on June 4 came a joint celebration of the King's birthday and the Repeal; and so presently began to arrive the troops destined for Detroit and the suppression of the Pontiac rebellion, so eagerly sought and so quickly forgotten in the general disturbances. They shared interest with suppression of the "leveller" movement in Connecticut which had begun to disturb the government; and collection of a subscription for a statue to Pitt. And, as Montresor observes, with evident satisfaction "No more meetings of the Sons of Liberty since the arrival of the Troops, no more caballing and Committees at every corner of the Street, nor even at present the name of a Son of Liberty mentioned or one to be ever heard of"; only news of insurrections up the river and troops marching to suppress them.

But this was not for long. By August the troubles arose again; this time by a meeting of two or three thousand men in the Fields under the lead of Sears to demand an explanation of the garrison for cutting down "a pine post where they daily exercised, called by them the Tree of Liberty." The crowd attacked the soldiers present; the general sent them aid; and there began again those disturbances between the mob and the troops which increased almost from day to day till the military authorities brought the artillery regiment into the fort and planted light field-pieces to protect the barrack yards. Little by little, as the troops were sent away to their respective stations, things seemed to have

quieted down. By the middle of September Captain Montresor records that "Remittances begin to be made home from the Merchants here. Bills being now more wanted and Exchange now at £180 New York currency." In short the Stamp Act disturbances had spent their force. For nearly a year New York had been—not to put it too strongly—virtually at the mercy of the mob; and it was high time, in the minds of many beside the British engineer officer, to bring this state of affairs to an end. The Americans had won their point; and the motto of the merchants, at least, was the familiar one of "business as usual."

From an English standpoint this was not the worst of the situation produced by the unfortunate act. Among its disastrous results, it had taught the colonists to unite. It is true that, startled by the mob violence which had accompanied the protest against the stamps, the conservatives and even some of the popular leaders had rather drawn back from the consequences which they feared might result from such a movement as that in which they found themselves involved. In Massachusetts the radicals carried their cause before the governor; but in Connecticut there was a sharp reaction against the mob and in favor of Ingersoll and his party. In New York the propertied classes, like those in the sister colony, were disturbed by the fear that the mob would attack them as it had the English officials; and, irrespective of party, they endeavored to moderate or control the more violent elements.

None the less the Sons of Liberty extended its membership and its programme, consolidating at once its principles and its organization. The spring of 1766 saw a great increase

in its correspondence; and the New York chapter received at its headquarters at Montagnie's which stood on Broadway just above Murray Street, and opposite the Fields, letters from their brethren as far north as Portsmouth and as far south as Baltimore; and became, apparently, for the time being, a centre for the whole movement. It is not without interest, in this connection, to observe that, so active were the New Yorkers, the attempt to force the resignation of the last stamp-master in America, Hughes of Philadelphia, seems to have been made as the result of a visit of John Lamb to Philadelphia to spur the Pennsylvanians to their task. As a result of this, Hughes' fellow members of the Heart and Hand Fire Company demanded his resignation, to which he replied that they had "done what they thought proper and he would in his own time do what he thought proper"—which he did, but not then.

The repeal of the Stamp Act, just a year after its passage, was, indeed, accompanied by a Declaratory Act, which expressed the right of England to tax the colonies; and with these events the history of the Sons of Liberty, and of the American Revolution, entered another stage. Great Britain had made her great mistake; she seemed prepared to make amends for it. No one, for the moment at least, took much account of the Declaratory Act. It seemed to be regarded as one of those harmless gestures designed to save the face of the government, not to be regarded seriously. No one, indeed, cared, so long as there was no specific effort to enforce taxation in America, how many such acts were passed; and for the time being it was to the interest of both sides to conciliate. But not to the interest of the elements which composed the Sons of Liberty, who had achieved their purpose

—and were wrecked by their success. Had Parliament learned its lesson there; had no further effort been made to enforce its policy in America—America would, scarcely without doubt, now be as free from British interference as Canada is to-day!

CHAPTER IV

The Critical Period, 1766–1774

IT is apparent that the five years which saw the beginnings of a new alignment of parties in English politics; the signature of the Peace of Paris; the reorganization of the imperial policy of Great Britain; the opposition to that policy in America and the passage and the repeal of the Stamp Act, form an important period in the history of both countries. Those developments profoundly affected not only the relations of the mother-country and her North American colonies, but the conditions within those colonies themselves. For the first time there had been welded out of the "radical" elements what may, in the light of coming events, be called a "popular" if not indeed a "national" party in America, opposed at nearly every point of membership, organization and principles to the groups within the various colonies which supported and were supported by the British government. For the first time this so-called "popular" party had found a general issue which could unite its previously unrelated elements. It had won a great victory on the issue of colonial taxation over the home government, and it had correspondingly increased its strength and its pretensions against those of its old rivals.

It would have seemed, therefore, that this party, with its organization of the Sons of Liberty, would thenceforth have gone steadily on from strength to strength, and become in a brief time the dominant influence in America. Many his-

torians have assumed that this was the case; but a more careful study of local conditions in the various colonies—especially in New York—indicates that this triumph was not so immediate and complete as it appeared to men of later days. It seems to prove, indeed, that between the repeal of the Stamp Act and the outbreak of hostilities there lies a critical period which, under other auspices, might well have seen the collapse of the new party and of whatever aspirations for independence it entertained.

It was natural that the news of the repeal should be received with much rejoicing in America; and the summer of 1766 was as full of celebrations, within the taverns and outside, as that of 1765 had been full of riots. It was no less natural that the Sons of Liberty, and the "popular" party generally, should take to themselves the credit, which they so largely deserved, for rendering inoperative an act of Parliament, and for asserting the right of America to determine her own destinies. But what was to be done next? The Stamp Act gone, there seemed little for the Sons of Liberty to do, at least in such large and vigorous fashion as had marked their entry into politics. They were reduced to their former activity in local affairs; to the erection of liberty-poles to commemorate their triumph; to platform and journalistic eloquence; and to that agreeable but somewhat futile pastime which has been described as "meeting annually to commemorate their resistance to the Stamp Act and express their admiration for one another." In this the New Yorkers at least were encouraged by a London correspondent who advised that "ten or twenty of the principler ones, to form yourselves into a club to meet once a month under the name of the Liberty Club and forever on the 18th

March or 1st May give notice to the whole body to commemorate your deliverance spending the day in festivity and joy." But it is evident that no party which lives exclusively on the memory of a past success can hope to have any great future. The first stage of their career had accomplished much. It had not merely compelled the English government to recognize the existence of an American sentiment; it had showed the colonists the methods and the strength of united effort. But to what end could that be used?

For the time being there seemed to be no particular purpose to which this great lesson of organized resistance could be directed. The two years following the repeal of the Stamp Act are relatively barren annals in the history of the new organization and of the movement of which it was a part. In England the Rockingham ministry, having exhausted its mandate with the repeal, fell from power, and was succeeded by that curious aggregation known as the Grafton ministry. In it William Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, was nominally the leading member, but in it he played no part of consequence, owing partly to his ill-nature, and more largely, perhaps, to his ill-health. It was not until June 1767 that the evil genius of England and America, Charles Townshend, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, and still obsessed with the idea of wringing revenue from the colonies, managed to smuggle through the House of Commons a tax on paper, painters' colors, glass and tea, destined to rouse the same opposition which his earlier proposal had encountered, and to carry the controversy between England and her colonies another stage on its unhappy course.

It was peculiarly unfortunate for Great Britain that the

passage of that act coincided with events in America and especially in New York, to rouse again the spirit of opposition. The so-called Mutiny or Provision Act which called upon the colonists to provide quarters, fire, candles, vinegar, salt, bedding, cooking-utensils, small beer, cider, and rum for the troops, though it was supported by the conservatives, was hailed by the "radicals" as another attempt to tax America. The operation of the customs duties, and the activities of the customs officials, above all the reported reduction of specie and the prohibition of the issue of paper money, added to the general dissatisfaction with the home government. When now to these was added the unwise Townshend Act, it seemed that the days of the Stamp Act agitation might be repeated, and many circumstances combined to bear this out. It was in line with the spirit of the time which looked to the economic independence of the colonies. As early as February 1767, the Philadelphia Cordwainers Company agreed not to buy any lamb, so as to increase the number of sheep and the production of wool and its manufacture, and many agreed to wear leather jackets to avoid unnecessary consumption of wool.

In October of the same year the Boston merchants entered into a new non-importation agreement inspired by the revival of the Townshend policy; and the non-consumption measures which had accompanied the Stamp Act were revived. By April 1768 the agitation reached New York; and in that month a meeting at Bolton and Sigel's, later Fraunces' Tavern, led to the foundation of one of New York's greatest institutions, the Chamber of Commerce, which met thereafter at the Royal Exchange. That action was followed by a non-importation agreement which was transmitted to

Boston and Philadelphia. In August another and more stringent agreement was entered into; and on the last day of 1768 the Assembly passed resolutions condemning the restraining act and asserting the right of the Assembly to consult with other colonies. A new Committee of Correspondence was appointed, and the English authorities were confronted with practically the same situation which they had faced two years before. To meet that situation, in May 1769, Grafton proposed the repeal of all taxes on America. All were removed except the duty on tea which was retained by a vote of five to four, and on that one vote depended the next development in the American controversy.

It was now complicated by another element—business depression. From a variety of causes, specie had been drained out of the colonies through the operations of trade; the issue of paper money had been restricted; business had fallen off, and the value of property had declined. It seems probable that this was but the natural result of economic laws, that it was, in part at least, due to the reaction following the stimulus of the war which had brought such great prosperity in preceding years. It may, like many such phenomena, have been more apparent than real, for it is certain that there was great building activity in the very years when men complained of the injuries done to America by the British policy. In every city, especially in New York, there were put up at this very time numbers of handsome private houses, and New York saw an extraordinary movement in church building in this period, which, though it may reflect an increased interest on the part of the colonists in the affairs of the next world, seems to indicate an improvement in the goods of this world as well.

Nevertheless there was a certain realignment of opinion which was of interest in this period. It was expressed in the appointment of Benjamin Pratt of Boston to succeed Chief Justice De Lancey who had just died; and though this was apparently only an *ad interim* nomination, it was opposed by the popular triumvirate, William Livingston, Scott and William Smith, and was protested by the Assembly which refused to increase the justice's salary. It was apparent again in the victory of the conservative and aristocratic De Lancey faction in the election of January 1769; and the concurrent circumstances of the appointment of a "committee of inspection" by the merchants to enforce the non-importation agreement. For not only had some enterprising importers in New York tried to take advantage of their competitors, but, what was still more exasperating to those competitors and to the New York merchants in general, they believed that their rivals in New England, and especially in the South, had been far from living up to their professions and promises. It seems evident from the figures of imports, at least, that New York was suffering greatly at this time from some cause; her merchants naturally believing this to be her loyal efforts to carry out this policy. At the same time the Sons of Liberty, who were but indirectly concerned with such economic politics, had begun to resort again to their practices of more direct action. They resumed their processions; they renewed their long rivalry with the soldiers of the garrison, which now centred in the efforts of the one to set up and maintain and of the other to destroy that symbol of the new movement, a liberty-pole.

The summer of 1769, therefore, was notable for the so-called "dealings" with merchants who had broken the non-

importation agreement; for correspondence with the merchants of other colonies; and for the riots which were produced by popular antagonism to the provision bill and to the possibly judicious but certainly unpopular refusal of the Crown to sanction the issue of £120,000 in bills of credit or public loan which had been passed by the Assembly. The Philadelphia merchants resolved not to store any goods received after the non-importation agreement was known in England, and to regard any one who ordered goods after February 6th, 1770, as a public enemy; while the members of the Crown and Beaver Fire Company followed the example of their brethren of the Cordwainers two years before by passing a self-denying ordinance with respect to eating lamb, and in this they were supported by a meeting of many freeholders who resolved to the same effect.

On December 16th, 1769, the agitation came to a head in New York with the appearance of a handbill entitled, "To the Betrayed Inhabitants of the City and Colony of New York," and signed "A Son of Freedom." This document accused the De Lancey faction of having agreed with the governor to betray the people, and called a meeting in the Fields for the day following to take measures to oppose the Provision Act. This was followed by another handbill against a vote of £2000 to support the troops, and about noon of the next day some fourteen hundred persons assembled in the Fields, appointed John Lamb as chairman and declared their opposition to the measure.

The resolution was presented to the city officials, but the De Lancey men denied that it represented the general opinion, and on the 19th appeared another handbill signed with a pseudonym then becoming common, "Legion," which no

doubt had Biblical connotation to the Loyalists. The Assembly, which was controlled by the De Lancey group, declared the bill a libel and offered a reward for the arrest of the printer of the broadside—one James Parker as it turned out—and for the alleged author who was identified as one of the leading Sons of Liberty, Alexander MacDougall, a retired shipmaster, who was accordingly arrested and interned in the New Gaol after refusing the bail which he might easily have offered. He preferred the rôle of a martyr, for reasons which were soon apparent.

Apparently on December 20 he was brought before the Assembly to answer for the libel which he was alleged to have written and for which he had been sent to jail. Refusing to give a categorical answer as to whether or not he had written the paper, his explanation as to why he ought not to be asked to give such an answer was cut short by the Speaker. He was defended by George Clinton in his refusal to answer until the courts decided whether the paper was or was not a libel, on the ground that though the Assembly "might throw the prisoner over the bar or out of the window, the public would judge and doubt the wisdom of the proceedings." MacDougall, "apprehending that his answer had not been fully understood by the House," asked and was given permission to "reduce it to writing" and so prepared a formal statement. The Speaker "adjudged it a reflection on the dignity of the House and if not withdrawn would be punished as contempt"* and, despite Clinton's protest, the Assembly, on MacDougall's refusal to retract or beg its pardon, again remanded him to jail.

The sheriff, declining the offer of Sears and his friends to

*Leake, *Life of John Lamb,* pp. 71-73.

serve on the jury, summoned a panel of his own choosing. To break the force of the charge against MacDougall, his counsel and his friends put in evidence a number of earlier pamphlets by various writers who had at various times attacked the government. These the jury rejected and brought in a true bill, and he was indicted. On his part, MacDougall's counsel, John Morin Scott, secured an order for his appearance, and his progress from the jail to City Hall was made the occasion for a sort of triumphal procession of his supporters. On their part, the Lieutenant-Governor and Council ordered the lawyers holding office under the crown to assist in the prosecution—which William Smith, himself a councillor, refused to do. Meanwhile the affair was argued, so to speak, outside of court, if not, indeed, by extra-legal means.

It was seized upon by MacDougall and his friends as a golden opportunity to harass the government. The case of John Wilkes in Great Britain was still fresh in men's minds; indeed it had not yet been finally concluded. MacDougall was hailed by his admirers as "the Wilkes of America"; and he and they turned his imprisonment into a triumph. He wrote letters to the papers; overwhelmed by the attentions of his admirers who gave him no time to himself, he appointed hours to receive his friends, who came to see him in large numbers. In imitation of Wilkes whose Number 45 of his "North Briton" had drawn upon him the wrath of the English government, "45 gentlemen dined with him, 45 ladies breakfasted with him, 45 tradesmen supped with him"; one friend sent him 45 pounds of beef; another 45 bottles of Madeira; others, 45 bottles of ale, and even 45 candles for these feasts.

While MacDougall and his party were thus employed, an event outside the jail carried the controversy another step. This was the so-called Battle of Golden Hill, whose circumstances were peculiarly characteristic of the times and the situation. There had long been bad blood between the Sons of Liberty and the handful of soldiers of the garrison; not merely on account of their rivalry over the liberty-pole, but more especially because the "hirelings of English tyranny," having very little to do in their military capacity, were accustomed to do odd jobs about the town, and so competed with the casual laboring element. They thus gained the double enmity of that element both as upholders of despotism and as "scab" laborers. While MacDougall remained—one cannot say languished—in jail, the long struggle over the liberty-pole came to a head in January 1770. This struggle which had greatly enlivened life in New York for some months, had been little interfered with by the authorities, who probably regarded it as a harmless method of working off spirits which might otherwise have indulged in more dangerous forms of activity.

At this juncture, however, the Sons of Liberty determined to erect a pole—the fifth which they had planted, it would appear—that would defy their enemies. To that end they secured a great mast, bound it about with iron bands for many feet, dug a deep hole, and used every means which their ingenuity could suggest, to secure it from destruction. On their part the soldiers, between the 13th and the 16th of January, made every effort to destroy it. On the latter date they finally succeeded. Enraged by this, the Sons of Liberty called a meeting, where some three thousand men, it was reported, assembled to denounce those who employed the sol-

diers instead of the poor of the city. The usual resolutions were passed, and, on the day following, January 18th, some soldiers engaged in posting a counter-broadside, signed "The Sixteenth Regiment of Foot," were seized by the Sons of Liberty, headed by Isaac Sears, and taken to the mayor's office.

Upon report of their capture, some twenty of their comrades came to their rescue; the mob gathered; and the mayor, fearing trouble, ordered the soldiers to their barracks. On their way thither, as they passed through John Street between Cliff Street and Burling Slip, they were joined by others. The Sons of Liberty rallied from all sides to attack them, and there ensued a lively street fight, until the officers of the fort appeared, and the soldiers were finally got into their quarters. This was not done, however, until two lesser conflicts had taken place, and as we are no doubt truthfully, but perhaps somewhat misleadingly, informed, "the first blood of the Revolution had been shed." This was, fortunately, not much, nor was it accompanied by any serious casualties on either side. With all of the significance which it acquired from the later course of events, without them it would have taken its place among those innumerable and forgotten instances of quarrels between garrisons and townspeople, which are the usual, if not the inevitable, accompaniment of the presence of troops in any community. Two months later, under not dissimilar circumstances, there took place the so-called Boston Massacre, which, by virtue of its relatively more serious outcome, and its more efficient publicity, acquired a much larger place in the history of the Revolution.

Yet though neither of these street affrays would have de-

served or received much attention under ordinary circumstances, they connected themselves with the great controversy between England and her colonies, which, at the very moment of the difficulty in John Street, was taking on new form. Ten days after the Battle of Golden Hill, the Earl of Grafton resigned as head of the ministry which bore his name, and his place was taken by Lord North, the friend and follower of the King. It was, as every one agreed, a forlorn hope which the prime minister undertook. England was then divided against herself as seldom, if ever, before in her history. The party system had virtually disappeared; and shifting groups had replaced the once powerful political connections of Whig and Tory, whose names alone remained. The nation was harassed by a controversy between the government and the political adventurer, John Wilkes, which the King and the Grafton ministry had permitted to become an issue of free speech and popular representation. She was at odds with her colonies; she faced disturbances and maladministration in India; she was in controversy with Spain over an aggression of the Governor of Buenos Ayres in the Falkland Islands; and the struggle between George III and the Whigs had demoralized her domestic affairs.

Conscious of all this, North undertook what he conceived to be his duty, against his own inclination and with a heavy heart. Personally the most likeable of men, honest, humorous, devoted to the King, he represented the general English attitude toward the colonies perfectly. That opinion had already been expressed in legislation. The obnoxious Townshend Acts had been repealed, save for the duty on tea; and that repeal was well received in America, especially in New York. But the tea duty had been retained, not for revenue

but as an expression of the right of Parliament to tax America. Without that right, it was argued, sovereignty was an empty phrase. While Pitt had drawn a distinction between the right to legislate and the right to tax, and between the right to levy "external" taxes and "internal" taxes, his subtle —and many persons thought invisible—distinctions were not apparent to the common mind on either side of the Atlantic. Indeed even in America his reputation had declined, for though his statue was just then being erected in New York, within two years it was noted that it began to suffer mutilation and, as Lamb's biographer observed, "many were disposed to think him a better friend to the King and to himself than to the votaries of liberty in either hemisphere." Indeed Chatham declared with that magnificent inconsistency for which he was notable, "The Americans are right to resist and to demand their freedom; I admire their independent spirit and I am their friend. But here I vow and declare that I will never consent to their independence." In regard to American resistance to the Mutiny Act so good a Whig as the Earl of Shelburne had observed "if Great Britain does not in some shape put forth her dignity on this occasion, she may end by losing all credit and reverence in America and likewise lose her power there"; and this may be taken as the common—and natural—British attitude.

Thus North at the beginning of his ministry was faced not only, as he said, by a situation which he had not created, but by a general sentiment which he shared. It was that if Parliament surrendered the right to tax, it abandoned sovereignty in America, however that abandonment might be disguised in flowing rhetoric. In that view he was undoubtedly supported by the great mass of his fellow-countrymen in the

British Isles. In that view he and they were opposed by an increasing body of Americans. He had his choice—he could let America go or he could make one last effort to maintain British sovereignty there, by conciliation, or, if that broke down, by force. He tried each in turn, and each failed in turn; and on that failure, among other things, his reputation was shipwrecked. Yet at the moment of his accession to office this was not evident. It seemed that some form of accommodation might be possible; and though he had voted to retain the tax on tea, and still maintained that principle, he set himself to the task of conciliation.

In that effort he found supporters in America, and nowhere more than in the city of New York. There, as in many other places, the Sons of Liberty had somewhat forfeited the good opinion of the more conservative mercantile element by what moderate men regarded as their senseless agitation in the preceding months. Moreover the non-importation policy had proved costly and not very successful; and business men were ready to come to an accommodation. As early as the spring of 1770, therefore, it was observed that there was a distinct breach between the elements which, each in its own way, had previously been opposed to English policy—the merchants and the Sons of Liberty.

This found perhaps its strongest public expression in the annual banquet which had been established to celebrate the repeal of the Stamp Act. That had been one of the recognized institutions for several years; but in 1770 there were two banquets instead of one, each claiming to be that of the true Sons of Liberty, but otherwise differing fundamentally. Some of the leaders, without consulting their prospective host, Montagnie, who had taken over the tavern formerly

kept by Bardin, "the Tammany Hall of the times," called their meeting at his place. His house, however, as he at once announced, had been previously engaged by another group, which went under the name of the "Friends of Liberty and Trade," and "had formerly associated at Bardin's." The disappointed group, therefore, secured the "corner house of Broadway, lately kept by Mr. Edward Smith"; and both dinners were duly held.

But there was a difference. The members of the "Friends of Liberty and Trade" kept away from Mr. MacDougall, who was still receiving in the New Gaol, and toasted "Trade and navigation and a speedy removal of their embarrassments." The other party, with few exceptions, visited the "American Wilkes," and toasted "A continuation of the non-importation agreement until the revenue acts are repealed." It is apparent from this, even if there were not in existence a list of the "Friends of Liberty and Trade," that this group represented business and property, rather than what had come to be known specifically as the "popular interest." Under such circumstances the MacDougall case came to an end after eighty-one days of what must have been unalloyed satisfaction to him and his supporters. The government witnesses had meanwhile disappeared. The young journeyman printer in Parker's office who had apparently given the information which had led to MacDougall's arrest, had been, according to report, frightened out of town, taking refuge first in Boston, then in England. Parker himself had gone to New Jersey and died there suddenly. Thus relieved of his accusers, MacDougall was apparently released on a writ of *habeas corpus* and the case against him fell to the ground at the moment when his party began to divide against itself.

This division of opinion and of sentiment was clear; but it was not an easy situation for the mercantile interests, between the popular party on the one side, indifferent to the economic issue, and the government on the other, obligated to uphold the supremacy of the mother-country in matters political. Especially from 1770 onward it became increasingly difficult for what we would call to-day the "business men." They had, for the most part, joined with the element seeking political power in the colonies in opposing the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts. But as their more radical allies went on from one position to another, each more advanced than the last, in particular as they resorted more and more to public disorder, the propertied classes naturally drew back. This was the more true in that business had begun to improve. The effect of the non-importation agreements had been to create a scarcity of English goods and consequently an increasing demand for them. Their relaxation stimulated trade. The post-war depression was now well past, the country prosperous; trade balances favorable and specie coming from England. Under such circumstances the last thing that business men desired was a renewal of political agitation.

In Boston and Philadelphia, no less than in New York, the "legitimate" merchants, as distinguished from those largely interested in smuggling, were more or less dismayed to find that the "radicals" threatened to dominate the situation. Those interested in smuggling, on the other hand, men like Hancock in Boston and Benedict Arnold in New Haven, to take two of the best-known names, eagerly embraced the so-called "popular" cause, as the other merchants became increasingly conservative. This did not apply so

much to the planting interest in Virginia, for the independent economic position of the planters enabled them to follow almost any political theory without great inconvenience to their means of support, as compared with the situation of the mercantile element.

Whatever we may think of the great political issue involved, it is not difficult to appreciate the feelings of a man whose all was invested in a pursuit which agitation threatened to destroy. The "radical" element, on the other hand, was more apt to gain than lose by a change in the political situation. Under any form of government there would still be a demand for labor; the lawyers would presumably have at least as much employment, and perhaps more offices, as the result of change; the publishers, then as now, throve on controversy; while the sea-faring men, the distillers, and the smugglers, stood to gain. For the American Revolution, like all other popular movements, must be measured in terms not only of principles but of interests involved.

It was apparent, then, that with the accession of Lord North the commercial classes generally favored modification of the non-importation agreements, now that the mother-country had made concessions and showed signs of being ready to come to some amicable arrangement with the colonies. On the other hand, the "radicals," perceiving that their contention, and perhaps their party, would disappear if the merchants and the government came to an accommodation, roused to fresh activity. The summer of 1770, in consequence, was filled with the resolutions of this town and that to import everything except tea; and counter-resolutions of the "radicals" attacking the mercantile policy. Processions began again; importers were hanged in effigy, and the committees of correspondence were unusually busy.

Nor was that correspondence simply the exchange of benevolent or patriotic sentiments. On May 11th, 1770, the New York Committee wrote to the Philadelphia merchants concerning one Nathan Rogers of Boston "one of those who have for some time past been advertised by the Committee of Merchants there as a person who had endeavored to counteract the laudable and patriotic resolutions of his brethren by persisting in importing British goods contrary to their agreement." He had, it appears, been "exhibited in effigy" in New York the night before, and as he was on his way to Philadelphia, speeded thither, it would appear, by his reception in New York, the Sons of Liberty in Philadelphia were advised of his coming and of his appearance so that they "may give him proper reception." To that end the New Yorkers even took pains to describe him minutely—"a man about 5 feet 8 inches high, pretty corpulent, round shouldered, stoops a good deal, and generally appears in green and gold or purple and gold"—and it would be interesting to know just what happened to this gentleman of such a cheerful taste in clothes. Yet in spite of this, there was so much defection from their ranks that the Sons of Liberty in Philadelphia wrote to their New York brethren on May 30 that "the Old Liberty Pole of New York should be transferred to that city as it no longer formed a rallying point for the votaries of Freedom at home." It appeared that in both cities there was an understanding that the non-importation agreement should be rescinded, save for tea.

New York, as might be imagined, took an active interest in this question. In the face of strong "radical" protest, the New York inspection committee decided to relax the non-importation agreement; and, challenged to take a vote on the question, its action was upheld by six to one, so that,

even from the point of view of popular sentiment, it seemed amply vindicated. In spite of this the "radicals" held meetings under the leadership of Sears and MacDougall—who was now out of jail—and carried resolutions against importation. Again the merchants appealed to the city, which again supported them; and thus encouraged, orders were hurried to England and business began to take on something of its former aspect. In the ensuing city elections the "radicals" were decisively beaten; and with this, if the country in general followed this lead, it seemed that England and her colonies might finally settle their differences peaceably. The fact seems to be that the merchants were pleased at the relaxation of the restrictions on the issue of paper money; they were irritated by what they believed, not without reason, to be the failure of Boston and Philadelphia to live up to the Association agreement: and they were ready to go on as before.

This era of good feeling was marked at this moment by a symbolic event which seemed to presage happier days for moderate men. On August 21, 1770, the leaden statue of George III, ordered by the Assembly in 1766, was erected on the Bowling Green and a month later the marble statue of Pitt was set up at what is now the corner of Wall and William Streets. And when the new governor, Lord Dunmore, appeared on October 25 with the royal assent to the emission of bills of credit, the spirit of conciliation was given fresh impulse.

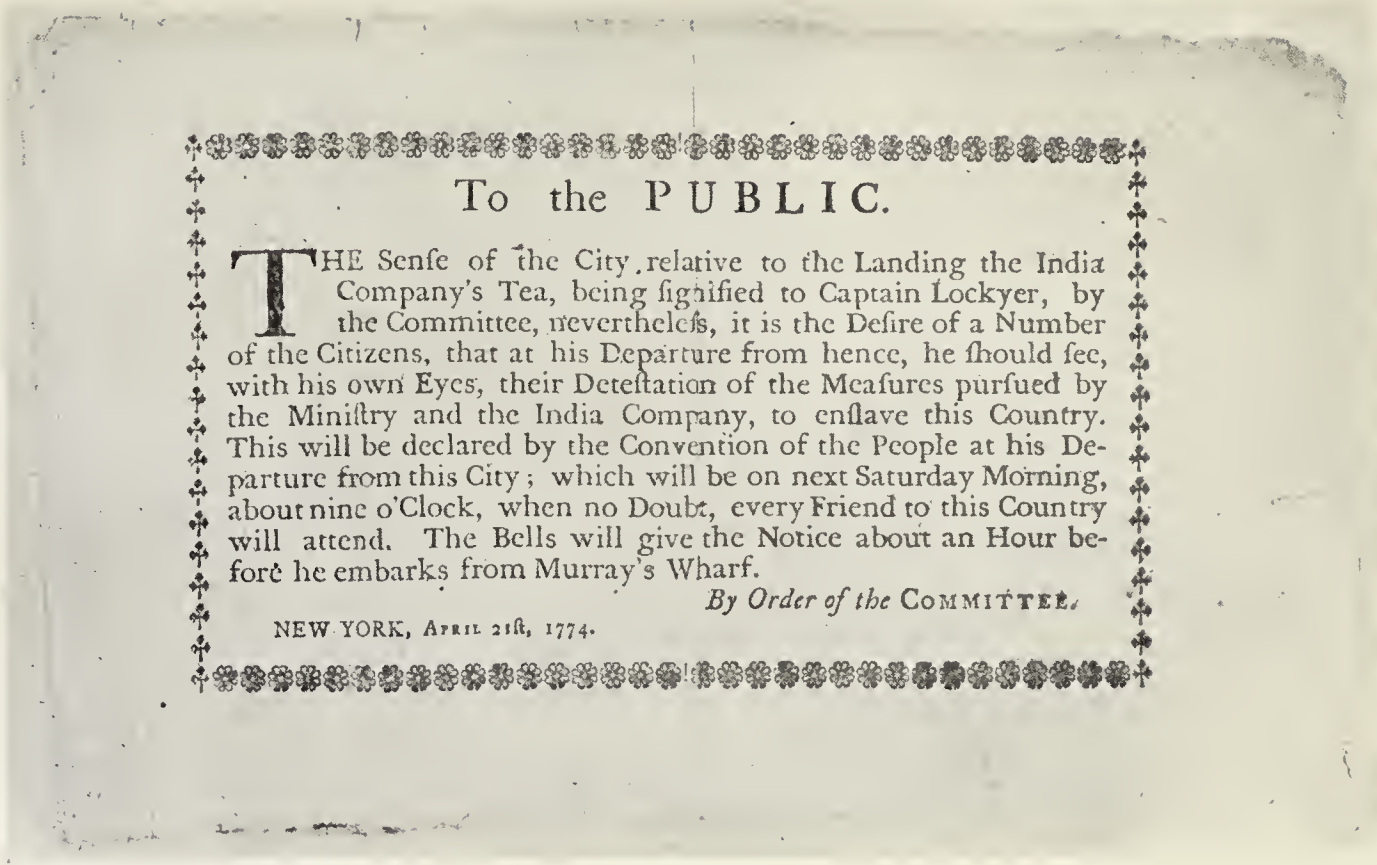
The hope of accommodation roused by the North ministry in these days seemed justified by succeeding events. For nearly three years the New York "radicals" cut little figure in affairs. They bought land and erected another lib-

erty-pole; they secured a building, owned by one Bickers and located on the corner of Broadway and Warren Street, which they named Hampden Hall and fitted up as a meeting-place; they strove zealously, by word and deed and correspondence, to keep alive the non-importation agreement. But they were able to influence public opinion little if at all in their favor. The breach between them and the merchants widened steadily; and the fact that their liberty-pole remained undisturbed is perhaps the best evidence that the older spirit of animosity had begun to give way to the "common-sense policy" of the more substantial elements. In some measure the same was true of other cities; and had that spirit been universal, or had the British government taken advantage of this lull in the storm to meet the American contentions and allow the obnoxious acts to be repealed or at least become inactive the future might have been very different.

Such was the relatively peaceful atmosphere into which the new Governor, William Tryon, who now replaced Lord Dunmore, was transferred from his post in North Carolina where he had made himself unpopular by his unbending severity in executing his orders and suppressing rebellion. Never in good health, compelled to seek medical advice finally in England, he seems to have been at this time a reasonably competent and even moderately popular administrator in his new government, only in later years by his military activities forfeiting the esteem in which he had been held. He might well have congratulated himself on the comparative quiet of the city into which he came in July 1772 —and in fact he seems to have done so. But even while he was on his way from his old governorship to his new post

events beyond his control or even his knowledge were preparing fresh difficulties for him to encounter. These arose both in England and America. The enforcement of the customs regulations had irritated more and more the smuggling element, especially in Rhode Island. In June 1772 came the destruction of the British vessel *Gaspée* by the Rhode Islanders, which further embittered the relations between them and the government, and led to the enactment of measures which raised new questions of jurisdiction between the colonies and the mother-country. Before they were either determined or concluded, the final touch was given the controversy by the fact that the British government embarked on the fatal tea policy.

On its face nothing could have seemed fairer and more promising, to its supporters at least, than that ill-fated measure. The East India Company, through the bad management of its directors, was in serious difficulties. It was heavily in debt; its administration in India was in wretched condition; and it had a huge surplus of tea. Under these conditions, Lord North's government, having advanced money to tide over its immediate financial embarrassment, and having reorganized its Indian administration under the provisions of an India Bill, proposed to reduce the duty on tea exported to America. Thus it hoped to dispose of the Company's surplus stock, provide the colonists with cheaper tea, and so recoup itself in some measure for its advances to the Company. Nor, it may be surmised, was it without hope of ruining the smuggling interests, especially those of the Dutch who had taken advantage of the situation to profit greatly by illicit trade. It does not appear that it had any darker motives than those which it alleged; least



To the PUBLIC.

THE Senſe of the City, relative to the Landing the India Company's Tea, being ſignified to Captain Lockyer, by the Committee, nevertheleſs, it is the Deſire of a Number of the Citizens, that at his Departure from hence, he ſhould ſee, with his own Eyes, their Deteſtation of the Meaſures purſued by the Miniſtry and the India Company, to enſlave this Country. This will be declared by the Convention of the People at his Departure from this City; which will be on next Saturday Morning, about nine o'Clock, when no Doubt, every Friend to this Country will attend. The Bells will give the Notice about an Hour before he embarks from Murray's Wharf.

By Order of the COMMITTEE.

NEW YORK, APRIL 21ſt, 1774.

THE PRINTED INVITATION TO THE FIRST NEW YORK TEA PARTY, APRIL 21, 1774.
From an original broadsheet in the New York Historical Society.

of all that it deliberately set itself to a policy which would stir America again into sedition. Except—and this exception went to the root of the whole question—it reasserted Parliament's right to tax America; and, behind all the rhetoric on either side, that was the issue of the "tea business."

But that policy which promised to be of advantage to all parties concerned, was destined to disastrous consequences. In it the American "radicals" found a cause which, no less —perhaps even more—than the Stamp Act, gave an excuse for the revival of their activities, and enabled them to more than recover the position which was slipping from them. They began at once to object to the proposed importation of tea, denouncing it as an insidious attempt of the North ministry to extract taxes, and, what was worse, the admission of the right to tax, from the deluded colonies.

As early as October 1773, the *New York Journal* began to print articles denouncing the new law as a scheme to give the East India Company a monopoly of trade and to undermine popular liberties by forcing America to pay taxes. It accused the tea-agents of occupying the same position as the stamp-commissioners eight years before. This was reinforced by an address of thanks to those captains who had refused to carry tea to America, though their refusal, in some instances, it would appear, was based less on purely patriotic grounds than on the fear of damage to their ships. The government's predicament was peculiar. "If tea came with a duty," Colden wrote, "it would be opposed as a tax; if it came without a duty it would be opposed as a monopoly." The designated consignees, having learned that it would come with a duty, however low, and having no desire to suffer the same fate as the stamp-agents, thereupon publicly announced that they

would refuse to receive it or sell it, and addressed a memorial to the Governor, asking him to take charge of the cargoes on their arrival. The "radicals," encouraged by the success of their manœuvre, embarked on still further agitation, and predicted if the government persisted in its design of "tyranny," the great days of the stamp riots would be revived. A New York merchant, Kelly, who had said that a soldier at the head of the government would restore order and bring in tea, was hanged in effigy on November 5, and a public meeting condemned all who aided or abetted the introduction of tea by landing, carting, storing, handling or selling tea should be boycotted.

In some form the same scene was meanwhile being enacted in most of the other colonies; and it was made more serious almost at once by another circumstance. Near the end of November 1773 there was prepared a document under the title of "The Association of the Sons of Liberty of New York," repudiating the action of Parliament. "To prevent slavery . . . and to transmit to posterity those blessings of freedom which our ancestors have handed down to us," the proclamation ran, its framers agreed to reorganize the Sons of Liberty of New York, and "to regard as enemies all those who took part in the tea business." This was followed by a mass-meeting. Letters were read from Boston and Philadelphia, where similar action had meanwhile been taken. John Lamb was appointed chairman of a new committee of correspondence; and it was determined to resist the landing of the tea. From this two things appeared. The one was that, until the unfortunate "tea business," came up, the Sons of Liberty had virtually disappeared as an organization; not, perhaps, as early as 1768, as has been claimed, but

certainly some time between that date and 1773. The other was that it was now resurrected, and became, in spirit or in fact, the active principle of renewed opposition to British policy.

Such was the situation when, toward the end of December 1773, there arrived in New York the "despatch-bearer of the Revolution," Paul Revere, from Boston, bringing the news of the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor; and encouraging the Sons of Liberty of New York to inflict a like fate on any cargo which might reach that port. That news was almost at once rivalled or even overshadowed by the great, and it was charged, incendiary fire which burned the Governor's house in the fort on December 29, 1773, destroying not only the house and furniture but many official papers—an omen, some thought, of the fate about to overtake the government!

But it was not until April 18, 1774, that the British ship *Nancy* arrived at Sandy Hook with the first cargo of the proscribed commodity belonging to the East India Company. The captain of the vessel, who had formerly taken credit for refusing to carry such cargo, was warned that he might have trouble in unlading, left his ship and came to New York in person. There he found that the consignees would have none of him nor of his tea. While he was still seeking some arrangement by which he might land his cargo, on April 22nd there arrived in the harbor the *London,* Captain Chambers, with another consignment, of whose advent the New Yorkers had already been advised by the Philadelphia Sons of Liberty four days earlier. At once two members of the committee of inspection boarded her. Her captain denied that he had any tea aboard, and his cockets

showed none. But when the vessel had anchored, it was searched and both cockets and tea were found by the persistent patriots.

With that the trouble began. The news was spread about the town that the tea had arrived; and the people were exhorted by the "radical' leaders to follow the example of their brethren in Boston. The captain of the *London* was brought before the "general committee" at Fraunces' Tavern, and there, under sharp questions, admitted that he owned the tea. Word was passed around that the "Mohawks" would do their duty at the proper time; presumably as soon as it was dark. But the more violent were not able to wait. The crowd began to collect early in the evening along the water-front opposite the ship; and about eight o'clock a small body of men boarded the vessel, and, apparently without resistance from the crew, seized the tea and dumped it into the harbor; whereupon the crowd dispersed. Early the next morning the captain of the *Nancy* was waited on by the committee, taken to the Coffee House, where a crowd had assembled, and thence escorted to Murray's Wharf. There, while the band played—incongruously enough, it must have seemed to him—"God Save the King," he and the captain of the *London* were put on board a boat and taken to their ships. Thus quietly and in due order was carried out the New York Tea Party, after the most approved fashion of the time.

CHAPTER V

The Steps Toward Independence, 1774–1775

IT could hardly be expected that any government could or would view with entire equanimity such defiance of its authority as the disturbances and the destruction which took place in the American ports in the spring of 1774. It was inevitable that these various "tea-parties" should bring in due season a retort from the imperial authorities. As Dartmouth wrote to Tryon in February, "I have it in command from the King to acquaint you that it is His Majesty's firm resolution upon the unanimous advice of His Confidential Servants to pursue such Measures as shall be effectual for securing the Dependence of the Colonies upon this Kingdom." It had come, as North said, to the question, not of tea, but of whether the mother-country had any rights in America—and to that there could be but one answer from the point of view of the British government. In consequence Parliament had addressed itself at once on arrival of the news from Boston to measures designed to make its power felt in retaliation for these outrages.

But if Parliament and the King committed themselves irrevocably to the word "dependence," it seemed to leave their opponents only one alternative—"independence"—and moderate men would find their position difficult or impossible if the extremists could neither be persuaded nor compelled to abandon their positions. This was not obvious in

Great Britain, for the moment; but it was only too apparent in America. Scarcely had the excitement of the destruction of the tea died down in New York when there arrived news of the passage of a bill closing the port of Boston. At once the Boston Port Act, which reached New York from England on Thursday, May 12, was reprinted and circulated as a handbill. A notice was posted at the Coffee House within twenty-four hours, calling a meeting at Fraunces' Tavern to consider the situation, and with its summons the controversy entered on another stage of its history.

The meeting had been called, apparently, by the more conservative mercantile element, which hoped to forestall more violent action by the "radicals"; and that circumstance marked a new turn in the situation—the entry of the mercantile party into the arena of what may be called popular politics. To this alternative they were virtually forced. Beside the "solid" element—conservatives and moderates—there was the new factor of the unenfranchised class now to be considered. It comprised a considerable portion of the population. It had shown itself not only ready but anxious to take a share in public affairs, especially by meetings and mobs; and despite the fact that its activities had not greatly commended it to the more sober part of the community, it was now a force to be reckoned with. For though the moderates had previously been able at nearly all times to control the legal voting population of the city, the establishment of extra-legal committees of all kinds revealed the entry of a new power in affairs, which even the entrenched moderates could scarcely afford to neglect, much less to despise. Hitherto they had refused to associate themselves with this unenfranchised element, which had fallen under the in-

fluence of the Sons of Liberty—or which had evolved that party. But the bases of politics were being changed; the class which had hitherto no voice in affairs became of importance in the new situation, which they had themselves largely created; and the moderates had before them the choice of ignoring this force, or of competing with popular leaders for its support. In fact they had but one; for if the men of property were to win, they needed to dominate not only their own party but the other group. The next act of the revolutionary drama in New York, therefore, centred in the struggle to control the city and its policy.

The news of the Boston Port Bill naturally roused the Sons of Liberty to fresh activity, and they promptly summoned a meeting of their own party, tradesmen and mechanics for the most part. That meeting, in anticipation of the coming discussion of the matter, and the probable appointment or election of a new committee to direct affairs, drew up a list of twenty-five names, partly conservative, but more largely radical, to present as its ticket in the general meeting. The two groups came together on Monday, May 16th, for a trial of strength which, in a fashion, determined the future of New York revolutionary politics. In the preliminaries to the contest the moderates won a victory by the election of Isaac Low as chairman, and it was agreed that a new committee should be created. The "radicals" proposed their list of twenty-five; the moderates proposed to make a committee of fifty—twenty-three from the names the "radicals" offered and twenty-seven others; and that proposal was confirmed by another meeting on the Thursday following. To the fifty thus chosen was added the name of Francis Lewis by mutual consent, and there came into being that

Committee of Fifty-One which was to play such a part in New York history in the ensuing months.

Among those present at the meeting which chose the Committee of Fifty-One was the young Gouverneur Morris who has left us not merely a description of the meeting itself but of the state of mind of many men in those days, a state of mind which influenced much subsequent action.

"Yesterday," he writes, "I was present at a grand division of the city, and there I beheld my fellow-citizens very accurately counting all their chickens, not only before any of them were hatched, but before above one-half of the eggs were laid. In short, they fairly contended about the future forms of our Government, whether it should be founded upon aristocratic or democratic principles.

"I stood in the balcony, and on my right hand were ranged all the people of property, with some few poor dependants, and on the other all the tradesmen, &c., who thought it worth their while to leave daily labour for the good of the country. The spirit of the English Constitution has yet a little influence left, and but a little. The remains of it, however, will give the wealthy people a superiority this time, but would they secure it they must banish all schoolmasters and confine all knowledge to themselves. This cannot be. The mob begin to think and to reason. Poor reptiles! It is with them a vernal morning; they are struggling to cast off their winter's slough, they bask in the sunshine, and ere noon they will bite, depend upon it. The gentry begin to fear this. Their Committee will be appointed, they will deceive the people, and again forfeit a share of their confidence. And if these instances of what with one side is policy, with the other perfidy, shall continue to increase, and become more

frequent, farewell aristocracy. I see, and I see it with fear and trembling, that if the disputes with Great Britain continue, we shall be under the worst of all possible dominions; we shall be under the domination of a riotous mob."*

The Committee of Fifty-One, as finally constituted, revealed two things with great clearness. The first was the moderate, even conservative, position of New York in the great controversy; for the representatives of that element outnumbered the radical members. But there appeared, as well, another division, long under way but now coming into definite view, that between the moderates and the conservatives. This combination had previously held the advantage against the radicals, and had thus far not been much divided against itself. Yet there was a growing difference of opinion between its component parts. The conservatives proper were, throughout, in favor of submission to the government, hoping to influence the British authorities by persuasion, but in any event determined not to antagonize the administration, much less to proceed to extreme measures against it, and hoping meanwhile to carry on affairs as nearly as possible as they had always been. The moderates, on the other hand, anxious to preserve their commercial interests, were not wholly averse to some more vigorous assertion of American rights; and, though they were far from approving the riotous methods of the radicals, they were not entirely out of sympathy with the principles which lay behind that riotous activity. On their part the "radicals" were little concerned with questions of trade and property. In many ways they were scarcely less opposed to the dominant financial and political group than to the British policy with which

*Am. Archives, 4 Ser., I: 343.

it was bound up; and they saw in this situation, which they had themselves largely created, an opportunity to assert not only the rights of the American colonies, but to replace the oligarchy with their own dominance.

This situation was reflected in the action of the committee which now for a time directed New York's political destinies. That committee at once found itself in an embarrassing position. Boston had requested New York to join in resolutions of non-intercourse in answer to the punitive measures of Parliament. But New York merchants were committed to the policy not of a general boycott, but of importing articles not subject to tax. The New York "radicals," on the other hand, were more than ready to support their fellows in Boston. They held meetings in the Fields; they denounced the Boston Port Bill bitterly; they opened a subscription for those who suffered by it; and they organized another committee of correspondence to carry on the work. Finally they raised the issue which had long been developing—that of the share of the unenfranchised classes in affairs. To accomplish this they appointed a so-called "Mechanics' Committee" which claimed equal rights for the classes hitherto excluded from voting, and virtually challenged the supremacy of the Committee of Fifty-One.

All this prepared the way for consideration of the great question of determining the general colonial attitude toward the new measures of Parliament, and the case of Boston in particular. Under the circumstances it seemed impossible to the Committee of Fifty-One to deny the Boston request without coming into active conflict with their radicals; it seemed equally impossible to accede to it without coming into direct conflict with the government. The Committee

adopted, therefore, the procedure which is almost invariably proposed in such situations—which, in fact, had previously been proposed in this case—and which almost invariably meets with success in such a body confronted with such a problem. It decided to refer this delicate question to a third party—in this particular instance, a colonial or continental congress. Such a conference seemed not merely a method of evading responsibility, but a means of settling, once for all, and for all at once, the thorny issue of the relations of England and her colonies. In such fashion was born, in New York as elsewhere, the idea of the first Continental Congress.

Few documents in the history of the great controversy more clearly illustrate the position of New York than "the famous letter" drawn up in the Merchants' Coffee House on May 23, 1774, and despatched to Boston. In its careful, formal phrases may be perceived the difficulty in which the Committee found itself, and the method which it took to extricate itself from its embarrassing position, without offense to either side. It may be regarded as "trimming"; it has been acclaimed as the origin of the first Continental Congress and the resulting independence of the United States. But it is best to consider it as the expression of those confronted by a peculiarly perplexing problem, endeavoring to find some means by which it might be solved to the satisfaction of reasonable men.

New York, May 23rd, 1774.

Gentlemen:

The alarming Measures of the British Parliament relative to your ancient and respectable Town, which has so long

been the Seat of Freedom, fills the Inhabitants of this City with inexpressible Concern; as a Sister Colony suffering in Defence of the Rights of America, we consider your Injuries as a common Cause, to the Redress of which it is equally our Duty and our Interest to contribute. But what ought to be done in a Situation so truly critical, while it employs the anxious Thoughts of every generous Mind, is very hard to be determin'd. Our Citizens have thought it necessary to appoint a large Committee consisting of fifty-one Persons to correspond with our Sister Colonies on this and every other Matter of publick Moment: and at ten o'clock this Forenoon we were first assembled. Your Letter enclosing the Vote of the Town of Boston, and the Letter of your Committee of Correspondence were immediately taken into consideration. While we think you justly entitled to the Thanks of your Sister Colonies for asking their Advice on a Case of such extensive Consequences, we lament our Inability to relieve your Anxiety by a decisive Opinion. The Cause is general and concerns a whole Continent who are equally interested with you and us; and we foresee that no Remedy can be of avail, unless it proceeds from the joint Act and Approbation of all. From a virtuous and spirited Union much may be expected: while the feeble Efforts of a few will only be attended with Mischief and Disappointment to themselves, and Triumph to the Adversaries of our Liberty. Upon these Reasons we conclude that a Congress of Deputies from the Colonies in general is of the utmost Moment; that it ought to be assembled without Delay and some unanimous Resolutions formed in this fatal Emergency, not only respecting *your* deplorable Circumstances, but for the Security of our common Rights. Such being our

Sentiments it must be premature to pronounce any Judgment on the Expedient which you have suggested. We beg however that you will do us the Justice to believe that we shall continue to act with a firm and becoming Regard to American Freedom, and to co-operate with our Sister Colonies in every Measure which shall be thought salutary and conducive to the publick Good.

We have Nothing to add, but that we sincerely condole with you in your unexampled Distress; and to request your speedy Opinion of the proposed Congress, that if it should meet with your Approbation, we may exert our utmost Endeavours to carry it into Execution.

We are with much Respect, Gentlemen

Your most Hbl Servants
By Order of the Committee,
Isaac Low, Chairman.
Alexander MacDougall
James Duane
John Jay

To the Committee of
Correspondence
in Boston

This determined, there arose immediately the question of who should be the representatives in such a body if it should be assembled; for it was evident that upon this depended the whole future of the struggle. With that went the question of how these representatives should be chosen; for upon that depended the whole future of the unenfranchised class in politics. Accordingly there began in New York a long and complex struggle between the moderates and conservatives,

who controlled the Committee of Fifty-One, and the radicals with their Mechanics' Committee, for the choice of delegates to the new Congress; and the month of July 1774 was filled with the activities of both parties to secure control of the New York delegation in that body. In the course of that struggle the Committee of Fifty-One was virtually compelled to recognize its rival. The "radicals" withdrew from the parent committee; the moderates were forced to a choice by mass-meeting, and there defeated. The conservative minority of the delegation thus chosen refused to serve. Two sets of resolutions, one moderate and one radical, appeared as instructions to the delegates; and, a complete deadlock having been successfully achieved, after nearly a month of continuous political activity a working compromise was finally arrived at and an election duly held on July 28th.

That compromise revealed, in a peculiar sense, the spirit and the strength of each party to the contention. The election was held, as the radicals desired, by all freeholders, freemen, and taxpayers, in the various wards. But the delegates chosen—John Jay, Isaac Low, James Duane, John Alsop, and Philip Livingston—if not actually conservative, were distinctly not radical. They committed themselves to a programme of non-importation, *at present,* and to the principle that the Congress should do whatever then seemed best for the country. But the very nature of the men chosen determined that they would be, as they were, essentially moderate in their counsels and influence in that body. The rural counties, though strenuously solicited, showed little interest in the matter. Six took no action at all, the rest authorized the city delegates to act for them; and in such fashion and in such hands New York entered the first Continental Congress.

This was the situation found by Mr. John Adams and his colleagues of the Massachusetts delegation to the first Congress in this summer of 1774 and nowhere is there a better picture of New York and the revolutionary movement in those days than the diary of that indefatigable chronicler. Coming down from Boston after ten days of journeying, with stops at various places for entertainment and counsel, accumulating much information of public opinion by the way, he arrived in New York with his fellow delegates on the morning of August 20th, passing, he notes, as he entered the city by way of Kingsbridge, "several elegant country seats." The party first put up at Hull's tavern, the Bunch of Grapes, then found lodgings with one Tobias Stoutenberg in King Street, between the City Hall and the French church. Adams had already had some information of the New York delegates to the Congress from that ingenious patriot, Silas Deane of Wethersfield, who told him that Duane and Jay were lawyers, Livingston, Low and Alsop merchants, that Livingston was very popular, and that Jay had married Philip Livingston's daughter, and was supposed to be of his side; which last was only partly true. Jay married William Livingston's daughter, and, as Adams observes, "seems to have possessed the confidence of both sides."

New York, as Adams wrote, would "be a subject of much speculation" to him. His curiosity was soon gratified. Almost immediately Mr. MacDougall and Mr. Platt came to see the Massachusetts delegates. Mr. Platt asked them to dinner on the following Monday; Mr. MacDougall stayed longer and made a good impression as a "very sensible man and an open one," with none "of the mean cunning which disgraces so many of my countrymen." That afternoon Mr.

MacDougall and Mr. Platt showed their visitors the city. They went first to see "the ruins of that magnificent building, the Governor's house," which had been burned the 29th of the preceding December. Thence they surveyed the fine prospect from the walk about the fort, "very pleasant, though the fortifications are not strong." They viewed the "beautiful ellipsis of land between the fort and the city, railed in with solid iron," enclosing the gilded lead statue of George III—in brief the Bowling Green. Thence they walked up "the Broad Way, a fine street, very wide" and, what seemed most peculiar to a Bostonian, even then, "in a right line from one end to the other of the city." They saw the "old church" and the "new church," that is to say, Trinity and St. Paul's. They looked at the "large and handsome" stone prison, with its two sets of barracks, King's College, and the new hospital then being erected. Thence they walked down to a shipyard where was being built a Dutch ship of eight hundred tons, and so through the "principal street of business," noting several markets, to the coffee-house, where they read the newspapers and were introduced to some of the many gentlemen present.

Among them were Mr. Morin Scott and a Mr. Litchfield, who invited them to Hull's Tavern where they took supper and stayed until eleven o'clock listening to Mr. Scott "a lawyer of about fifty years of age; a sensible man but not very polite . . . said to be one of the readiest speakers on the continent" and "censuring Mr. MacDougall in a friendly way for not insisting upon choosing delegates by ballot." The two great families, Mr. Adams learned, "upon whose motions all their politics turn were the Delanceys and the Livingstons. There is virtue and abilities as well as fortune

The Fly Market, on Maiden Lane at Pearl Street, as It Was in 1816.

From a lithograph by George Hayward after a drawing by J. Evers, published in *Valentine's Manual* for 1857.

in the Livingstons but not much of either of the three in the Delanceys," according to Mr. MacDougall.

Sunday they went to "meeting" at the "old Presbyterian Society," where Dr. Pemberton formerly preached, and listened to Dr. Rogers discourse on "Seek first the kingdom of God," after which Mr. Peter Vanbrugh Livingston and Mr. Thomas Smith were brought to their lodgings by Mr. MacDougall, and Mr. Adams learned of the loyalist activities of Dr. Cooper and his Episcopalian colleagues, designing, it was suspected, the union of that body to support the British ministers. Then in the afternoon they went again to the same "meeting," praising the sermons but disliking the "psalmody" in "exact contrast to that of Hartford . . . the *old way* we call it—all the drawling, quavering discord in the world." Thereafter Mr. MacDougall introduced them to Mr. William Smith, the historian of New York, a "plain, composed man" "a little turned of forty," who asked them to tea.

But they were already engaged by Mr. MacDougall at whose house they met his "charming" wife and his "agreeable" daughter, as well as Mrs. Clymer, a "very facetious and social lady" from Philadelphia who inquired very kindly after Mr. Hancock and his aunt, and Mr. Jonathan Mason and his family. There also they met, in this gathering of the patriotic clans on their way to Congress, Colonel Folsom and Major Sullivan, the delegates from New Hampshire, "hastening over the ferry for fear of the smallpox," also Mr. Low, a relative of the New York delegate of that name, Mr. Hughes, a "schoolmaster," and many others, including "Mr. Lamb, the famous patriot and Son of Liberty."

Monday they took Mr. MacDougall in their coach three

miles out in the country to breakfast with Mr. Scott in his "elegant seat, with Hudson's River just behind his house and a rural prospect all around him." There, with Mrs. Scott, their daughter and her husband, Mr. Litchfield, they sat down to "a more elegant breakfast I never saw—rich plate, a very large silver coffee-pot, a very large silver tea-pot, napkins of the very finest materials, toast, and bread, and butter, in great perfection," and "after breakfast a plate of beautiful peaches, another of pears, and another of plums, and a muskmelon were placed on the table."

There as elsewhere he learned more of the patriot party and its opponents in New York. Mr. Scott, Mr. William Smith, and Mr. William Livingston—all three, this Harvard graduate notes, "children of Yale College," had opposed the Church of England, and had written the *Independent Reflector* and the *Watch Tower*. Scott and Livingston were reckoned "lazy," but Smith "improves every moment of his time"; despite which Scott was reckoned an eminent lawyer and had drawn the Council's answer to Governor Colden in the once famous case of Forsey *vs.* Cunningham. Duane, who had invested most of his money in 64,000 acres of the lands contested between New York and New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Grants so-called, later Vermont, and had drawn up the claims of New York to that region, was an Episcopalian, like Livingston and unlike all the other New York delegates. Mr. John Jay, observed Mr. Scott, was about twenty-six, a hard student and a good speaker; Mr. Alsop a merchant of "a good heart," but small abilities; Mr. Low, the chairman of the Committee of Fifty-One, "will profess his attachment to the cause of liberty, but his sincerity is doubted." Mr. McEvers—sometime, it may be re-

membered, the stamp agent—Mr. Beech, and Mr. William Bayard were intimates of General Gage when he was stationed in New York, and the last-named had a son in the East India Company's service, and a son-in-law in the army. All these, though they profess attachment to the American cause, were "connected with Mr. Apthorp and his contracts . . . lookers-up to government for favors and correspondents of General Gage." Moreover, oddly enough, Mr. Adams heard regret expressed that the General who had been so popular in New York, was certain to lose his "reputation and good opinion" in Boston—as he did.

To this survey Mr. MacDougall added some observations on the state of parties. One powerful group was "intimidated by fears of a civil war" but "have been induced to acquiesce by assurances that there was no danger and that a peaceful cessation of commerce would effect relief." Another group feared the introduction of the "levelling spirit of the New England Colonies should propagate itself into New York"; and another group was "prompted by Episcopalian prejudices against New England." Another party was composed of merchants largely concerned in navigation and therefore afraid of non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreements, and still another group was made up of those who are looking up to Government for favors.

With this entertaining conversation, about eleven o'clock four of the New York delegates appeared to pay their respects; Mr. Duane "between forty and forty-five," his "sly, surveying eye, a little squint-eyed . . . very sensible and very artful," declaring that from their correspondents and the letter of their agent Mr. Burke the English nation seemed against them, even the merchants, for "their pride was

touched." Whereupon the lawyers began to argue, apropos of the Boston Port Bill, whether the Crown had a right to license wharves. Mr. Livingston, "a downright, straightforward man," Mr. Alsop, "a soft, sweet man," took their share, the former arguing for the rights of the Crown against Mr. Adams and Mr. Duane.

Later Mr. Scott took them in his "chariot" to Mr. Platt's, where they were shown into "as elegant a chamber as ever I saw—the furniture as rich and splendid as any of Mr. Boylston's," which praise, from a Bostonian, could go no further, for the house of Mr. Nicholas Boylston, "Tantivy Nick" as he was called, "the cynosure," was the last word in elegance and refinement in those days. There they dined and spent the afternoon with Mr. Low, Mr. Peter Vanbrugh Livingston, Mr. Philip Livingston, Dr. Treat, the minister's brother, Mr. MacDougall, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Litchfield; and there Mr. Adams continued his education in New York politics and revolutionary training.

Thus he spent a week, viewing the city, meeting and judging the members of the patriot party, making up his mind on many men and many matters, courteous, inquiring, observant, critical; and on no subject more illuminating than on that of the revolutionary leaders. P. V. Livingston, now retired and living on the income of the fortune he had made in trade, appears to the astute Bostonian, a "sensible man and a gentleman," in sharp contrast to that "great, rough rapid mortal," Philip Livingston, who "blusters away," continually. Mr. Low, with his "rich furniture for the tea-table" and his beautiful wife, explains to him the city government and reveals that the taxes are about a third of those of Massachusetts. Mr. Hazard, a "genius," asks his ad-

vice about the collection of state papers he is making and is referred to Samuel Adams and Dr. Samuel Mather. The Committee of Correspondence invited the Massachusetts men to dinner in the Exchange Chamber, more than fifty gentlemen at a "most splendid dinner." They visited Mr. Cushing's pumps to provide the town with water from Fresh Pond. They looked with the critical eyes of Harvard men upon King's College with less than forty students. They paid a call of ceremony on Mr. William Smith, "a great lawyer, a sensible and learned man, and yet a consistent, unshaken friend to his country and her liberties." They heard from him the story of his negotiations between the Governor, the General, and the mob in the Stamp Riots of 1765; and from MacDougall the story of his prosecution for libel. They noted Smith's opinion of General Gage, "a good-natured, peaceable and social man . . . altogether unfit for Governor of Massachusetts." They visited Holt, the "liberty printer," Noel and Hazard's. They looked over Trinity Church and churchyard, and St. Paul's.

And, generally speaking, they did not like New York. Adams observes that "with all the opulence and splendor of this city, there is little good breeding to be found. We have been treated with assiduous respect; but I have not seen one real gentleman, one well-bred man, since I came to town. At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable; there is no modesty, no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and altogether. If they ask you a question, before you can utter three words of your answer, they will break out upon you again and talk away." "The way we have been in, of breakfasting, dining, drinking coffee &c about the city is very disagreeable to us on

some accounts. Although it introduces us to the acquaintance of many respectable people, yet it hinders us from seeing the college, the churches, the printers' offices, and booksellers' shops, and many other things which we would choose to see."

That desire was eventually gratified but it was apparently with some relief that on the following Saturday the party crossed Paulus Hook Ferry to New Jersey, then "Hackinsack" Ferry, then Newark Ferry, dined at Elizabethtown, rode twenty miles, crossed Brunswick Ferry and so reached Brunswick on their way to Philadelphia, stopping by the way to visit "Nassau Hall College" at Princeton, to hear the scholars "sing as badly as the Presbyterians in New York," to drink a glass of wine with President Witherspoon "as high a Son of Liberty as any man in America," and to hear his opinions of the various leaders of the patriot party especially of Smith, Scott and Duane, and to make acquaintance with the local leaders of that group. But, odd as it may seem, neither in New York nor elsewhere, until he reached Philadelphia, did he come into contact with the greatest of them all, with whom he was to be so closely associated in later life, that man to whose "purity of character, united with ability, wisdom and patriotism of the highest grade" he testified thereafter, John Jay, the ablest, as he was the most representative figure among the New York "patriots."

Such is the picture which John Adams paints of New York and its revolutionary leaders as he journeyed to the Congress which was in no small measure to determine the future of the great movement in which he was to take so large a part.

That Congress to which Adams and his colleagues thus

made their way met in Carpenters' Hall at Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. It has often been described as a moderate, if not a conservative, body and had the moderate party in its membership not been driven from its position by events outside itself, it would have merited that description. There were, as Jay observed, but three alternatives before it —negotiation, non-intercourse, and war. The "radicals" opposed negotiation as too mild; the conservatives opposed non-intercourse as too drastic; and there appeared no other alternative, for war at this time seemed unthinkable to most men. It is not necessary now to enter on the question of the relation of the radical Massachusetts delegation in the Congress to their supporters at home. Under different circumstances it is probable that the New Yorkers or the Virginians, almost equally moderate, would have found some method of accommodation. But on the day the Congress met, General Gage began to fortify Boston Neck. On the next, the Suffolk County convention passed resolutions that no obedience was due to the recent acts of Parliament to punish Boston; and letters from abroad, especially from Franklin, urged unanimous action, preferably non-importation. Yet though war may have seemed inconceivable, even in the face of this situation, as early as this Colden was warned that great quantities of gunpowder were being carried from Holland to America by the smugglers—300,000 pounds in one shipment, he notes, together with military stores, especially through St. Eustatia in the West Indies; and this produced within a month an Order in Council against such traffic.

Congress faced the same problem which had confronted those who sent its members to their posts. To repudiate the

Suffolk County resolutions was to give up the whole contention; to accept them was to move forward to rebellion. Conservatives, like Galloway, Duane and Jay, urged a British-American Parliament, in a final effort at compromise —or at least shouldering the problem on to still other men. But under the circumstances compromise had become all but impossible; and even negotiation, in the face of the alternative presented by the Suffolk resolutions, seemed scarcely less practicable. The Boston situation, in the hands of Gage and the Massachusetts radicals, grew more and more acute; and the Congress was finally driven to the radical position by the necessity of either supporting or repudiating Boston. An absolute non-importation agreement; recommendations to the people to arm themselves; provision for provincial congresses, were confirmed in accordance with the Suffolk resolves; and the Congress under radical influence proceeded to prepare a scheme for non-intercourse. Merchants were requested not to order from England; no goods were to be imported after December first; and an "Association" to carry out this policy was prepared.

The proposal for a British-American Parliament was defeated; petitions and memorials were addressed to the King, the English people, the British colonies, and the inhabitants of Quebec; and machinery was prepared to carry out the non-intercourse policy by local committees commissioned to enforce a nation-wide boycott in every town and district. In effect the Continental Congress set up a new authority in opposition to that of the British government and its officials. It thus raised the issue of allegiance; and it divided the colonists even more sharply into two hostile groups. Moreover it provided a centralizing element for the committee system

which, in Massachusetts especially, had been so elaborated that nearly every town had nominally or actually three—one for correspondence, one for what was called politely "inspection," and one for "safety."

This situation found echo in New York as in the other colonies in this late autumn and winter of 1774–5. There was formed a "committee of observation" to guard the "popular" interest and by the time that the New York delegation returned from Congress in the first week of November, it was evident that the moderate programme was breaking down. With it went the Committee of Fifty-One; and in its place there presently arose another body, the Committee of Sixty, to enforce the Association. Nominally an enlargement of the "committee of inspection," it assumed other powers and took on another and more revolutionary aspect. Its very formation, in fact, discovered a change in the political situation. It was organized at the suggestion of the Committee of Fifty-One, followed by a mass-meeting of the "radicals," and that in turn by a conference between representatives of the Committee of Fifty-One and those of the Mechanics' Committee. This conference provided for the election of a new body by freemen and freeholders at a general election held at the City Hall; and in that body, though all shades of opinion were represented, it became apparent that the advanced party was gaining at the expense of the conservatives.

The Association forced the issue; for men were compelled to take sides. Whosoever was not for the Association was reckoned against it; and "loyalists" and "patriots" were thus aligned against each other. It had been promulgated by the Committee of Fifty-One but with indifferent success. Next

it was brought before the Colonial Assembly which met in January 1775; and its appearance in that historic body revealed at once the new political lines in their most definite form and foreshadowed the fate of the Assembly itself. The open and aggressive loyalists were willing to go no farther than to memorialize Parliament regarding the colonial grievances—even when they were willing to go that far. Their opponents proposed to approve the Association and send members to the Second Continental Congress which was to assemble in the spring if "justice had not been done" by that time. The loyalists were successful in preventing full recognition of the radical position; but the more advanced party succeeded in drawing up a list of grievances and even in securing a committee of correspondence.

Despite that, so far, it seemed—in England—that New York had been saved for the government; and in February, 1775, Tryon wrote from his sick bed at Bath that he was "happy to find . . . that the Province maintains a Temper and Moderation becoming their Loyalty to their Sovereign and Regard to their Mother Country." Had he been in closer touch with the inner workings of the people of his province, especially with that element then opposing all he represented, he would not have been so optimistic. But in a day when communication was so slow and so uncertain, the British government was hampered by its greatest enemies, distance and time, and here their opponents had always the advantage over them. Even as Tryon wrote, events in New York had gone past him.

CHAPTER VI

The Beginning of Conflict, January–June 1775.

THE felicitations of Governor Tryon to Lieutenant-Governor Colden on the "moderation" of New York in the early spring of 1775 must have seemed peculiarly ironical to a harassed executive on the spot. Long before Colden received his superior's message, the direction of New York's affairs had begun to slip from the Assembly's hands and another power had begun to function in the province. The meeting of the Assembly in January had, indeed, virtually disapproved of the first Continental Congress and refused to appoint deputies to the second. It had drawn up a list of grievances embodied in a petition to the King. It had avowed allegiance to the sovereign and obedience to Parliament; but it had declared that certain acts of Parliament had infringed colonial rights, that there should be no taxation without representation, and that the right of trial by jury should not be infringed. It had appointed a standing committee of correspondence; and so adjourned in February to May 3.

This action was naturally displeasing to the "radicals." It was interpreted as a reverse to their cause; and even while Tryon wrote and the Assembly acted, they were planning another means of bringing New York into line with the revolutionary movement. The issue was raised in the Committee of Sixty by Philip Livingston and on March 1 that Committee voted to summon the freemen and freeholders of the city to meet on March 6 to consider the question of

sending delegates to the Congress, and the method of electing them. It was proposed, in fact, to create a new body, a "provincial convention," composed of men from every county to choose such delegates. This, if they could control it, as they planned to do, would not merely provide New York with representation in the Congress from their own ranks, but it would neutralize both the Assembly which had refused to name delegates, and the conservatives on the Committee who hesitated to name them. Despite the efforts of the conservatives, a "general meeting" was held on March 6, attended by the radicals who had assembled at the liberty-pole and the conservatives who had met at Montagnie's. The former carried a banner with "George III Rex, and the liberties of America" on one side, and "The union of the Colonies and the measures of Congress" on the other. The two parties met at the Exchange and it seemed for a time that the meeting would break up in a riot.

Order having been restored with some difficulty, under the presidency of the chairman of the Committee of Sixty, Isaac Low, the meeting was asked to decide whether deputies should be sent to a provincial convention; and whether the committee should be authorized to nominate them. Refusing the demand of the conservatives for a poll of the freeholders and freemen, the vote was taken *viva voce* and both proposals were declared to have been carried. With this shrewd manipulation, both of the questions and the procedure, New York advanced another stage on the way to independence.

"Independence" was, indeed, repudiated as an aim by the leaders of the great movement then sweeping through the colonies; and Franklin even declared before the British

Parliament that he had never heard the word used. That was probably literally true, not only because Franklin was in England from 1757 to 1775 with the exception of about two years but because men avoided those dangerous syllables as they would the plague. As late as the spring of 1776, men were chary of the word. "You must not utter the word independence, nor give the least hint or insinuation of the idea, either in Congress or any private conversation; if you do, you are undone; for the idea of independence is as unpopular in Pennsylvania, and in all the Middle and Southern States, as the Stamp Act itself," said the Pennsylvania leaders of the Sons of Liberty to the Massachusetts delegates as they journeyed to the Congress which was to declare independence. Nor could Dr. Rush, Mr. Mifflin and Mr. Bayard, who gave this advice, be regarded either as loyalists, or even as cautious moderates. It was, according to John Adams, Dr. Rush who supplied the inspiration, the ideas, and even the title of the pamphlet to Thomas Paine, that "disastrous meteor" who wrote *Common Sense*.* And though Adams disapproved of the "simple ignorance" and the "foolish superstition" of Paine's "democratic" ideas; though he wrote his *Thoughts on Government* to oppose it; though his ideas were adopted as the principles of the constitution of New York, of Virginia, and of other states; though he detested Paine; no one could accuse John Adams of trimming.

It was perhaps even possible that many, if not most, of those actively engaged in the movement had not figured to themselves whither their steps were leading. It is not uncommon for revolutionary leaders to deny to the very end

*John Adams, *Diary*.

that they propose to overthrow the existing government. They go forward in the name of reform, not that of revolution; they demand only their rights, or liberty. They do not intend to fight, but they intend to have their own way. They follow a path which makes armed collision inevitable unless the authorities give way; and when war comes they assert with every appearance of sincerity that those authorities are responsible for the conflict. In that view the real authors of revolution are those who resist change, not those who seek it. Such is the almost invariable defense of revolutionary leaders at all times; and at no time more than in this case.

In such situations as these, though men have quibbled over words, that is little to the point. Nor, if Judge Jones may be believed—and he was a sober and truthful man—was even the word independence lacking. "In one of the weekly papers, under the title of the *American Whig,* published in 1769," he writes "the following remarkable expressions were made use of; speaking of America and its wide extensive continent, with its number of inhabitants, and richness of its soil, it is thus asserted,—'This country will shortly become a great and flourishing empire, independent of Great Britain; enjoying its civil and religious liberty, uncontaminated, and deserted of all control from Bishops, the curse of curses, and from the subjection of all earthly Kings; the corner stones of this great structure are already laid, the materials are preparing, and before six years roll about, the great, the noble, the stupendous fabric will be erected.' How well this prediction has been verified the times at present [1784] show."*

But the Americans not only had just cause of complaint

*Jones, *History of New York,* p. 24.

against the British government; they could allege with truth that it was a new policy, or at least enforcement of old laws, now virtually in abeyance, that had roused them to resist. The revolutionary element could, and did, believe and assert that it was aggression from the other side that forced them to take arms for "liberty." Had they struck for their "independence" at the very start they would have found few followers or none; nor did they probably—not even the most radical of them—intend to bring matters to the pass of armed conflict for that end. But words are tricky things; what one might mean by "liberty" bore a very different meaning to his neighbor; what Americans called "liberty" might well seem "independence" to a British government. Moreover if it appeared that liberty could never be achieved save by independence, men would move toward the latter, consciously or unconsciously; or even be driven by forces outside themselves.

The loyalist pamphleteers, like the Episcopalian clergymen, Seabury, Inglis and Cooper, had long contended against the "patriot" propaganda, urging that it was meant to overthrow existing order and institutions. The paper war grew as bitter as the political conflict; each side confirmed in its opinions by the "appeal to reason"; each perceiving in the other's arguments only the selfish interests which prompted them; each believing that the other's triumph meant the downfall either of order or of liberty. And in these early months of 1775 it was increasingly evident from events in New York as elsewhere—and elsewhere even more than in New York—that men would have to choose. As in such cases generally, the moderate middle group is driven to take sides with one extreme or the other.

Such was the difficult situation of those who now found themselves confronted with the choice between advancing or going back—for they could no longer stand still—and while the loyalists did not give way, an increasing number of the moderates were forced along the road to active resistance. The Committee of Sixty nominated eleven men. That number included the five who seem to have been, on the whole, the strongest political figures of the period—Low, Duane, Jay, Alsop and Philip Livingston—all delegates to the first Continental Congress. To these the radicals were able to add six others of their own faith—Francis Lewis, Leonard Lispenard, Alexander MacDougall, Isaac Roosevelt, Abram Walton and Adam Brasher. The election was held on March 15 and by a vote of about five to one the freemen and freeholders declared themselves in favor of the convention and the Committee's ticket. Meanwhile the efforts of the more advanced leaders to stir up further strife were, for the moment, successful. On April 6 a meeting of the Sons of Liberty at their liberty-pole on the Common, presided over by Lamb and Willett, was addressed by Sears —"King Sears" as he was called—who urged the men to arm and attack the hardware merchant Ustick for violation of the non-importation agreement. It came to nothing more than demonstration; for the radical leaders were absorbed in a more important enterprise—the control of the new provincial convention. They were busy securing the counties. There, by judicious management, they were able to secure a vote favorable to the convention in most of them, and the election of delegates in at least eight, outside of the city.

On April 20 the provincial convention met at the "Exchange" in New York City. On the day following it chose

delegates to the new Continental Congress. In that body Isaac Low was replaced by the more radical Francis Lewis; John Haring declined to serve; but the other members—Duane, Philip Livingston, Alsop, Jay, from the city, Henry Wisner of Orange, William Floyd of Suffolk and Simon Boerum of King's were re-elected. To these were now added the names of George Clinton, Lewis Morris, Peter Schuyler, and R. R. Livingston. On the whole it was not an alarming list. "From the accounts you give of the Characters and Tempers of the five Gentlemen appointed by the City of New York to be their Delegates at the General Congress," wrote Lord Dartmouth to Colden, "I should suppose they would not be likely either to advise or support rash and violent Measures." But, he adds, "there is too much reason to fear that the Majority of the Delegates are of a different Complexion"; and it was evident, even in the strong New York delegation, which included several members of the Assembly and several destined to more eminent positions, that the noble lord's fears were fully justified. The "radicals" had gained. Yet even so, they had not won the game; for from the constitution of this delegation two things were apparent. The "radical" party had made progress but, in a certain sense, at the expense of its radicalism. Its most violent leaders, like Lamb, Sears and MacDougall, had been excluded from a voice in the national deliberations; the moderates were still the dominant element in New York's delegation, despite the fact that the "radicals" had increased their hold on the Congressional representation. Though the revolution was obviously approaching a new crisis, New York was still, in its extra-legal as well as in its legal aspect, not committed to the cause of force.

None the less it was apparent from events within that city, and still more from those in the centre of the agitation, Boston, that the crisis would not long be delayed. While the Assembly deliberated, and the provincial convention was set in motion, the mob spirit appeared again in manifestations which recalled the most active days of the Stamp Act and the tea riots, and now with an even more sinister significance. The sending of supplies to the troops of the Boston garrison was accompanied by a popular rising which ended in the arrest and the rescue of Sears. But the arrival of the British man-of-war, *Asia,* in the harbor lent strength to the government; and it seemed for the moment that the forces of order, thus reinforced, might triumph in spite of all.

That hope was soon dispelled. On the day after the nomination of the delegates to the second Continental Congress, the provincial convention adjourned. On the day following —Sunday, April 23—at about four in the afternoon, the news of the Battle of Lexington arrived in New York; and with that began the last act in the transformation of parties and of the peaceful efforts to compose the quarrel between England and her colonies. The first result of this startling news was a fresh outburst of violence. Lamb, Sears, and Willett led the crowd to the sack of the arsenal and there seized some six hundred muskets which were "distributed among the most active citizens who formed themselves into voluntary corps and assumed the government of the city." They paraded the streets, took possession of such public stores as they could lay their hands on, forced the customs-house to close, and terrorized the town. The little force of British regulars—less than a hundred men—was kept in barracks, and the city authorities joined with the governor

in doing nothing to stop the trouble which was now beyond their power to control.

Nothing more clearly indicates the situation in which New York found itself at this moment, as well as the development of revolutionary spirit, than the minutes of the City Council, transmitted to the lieutenant-governor on the first of May 1775 "that the advice of the Council for the prorogation of the Assembly may not be interpreted into a neglect of the last intimations of his Majesty's pleasure for restoring the Tranquility of the Empire." "There was," the minutes observe, "in the Course of the last Winter, a general Expectation in this Province of some Signification to the Colonies, upon the contested Subject of Taxation and other Grievances, and an earnest Desire in the People to maintain their antient Union with, and dependance upon Great Britain . . . If the Secretary of State's letter had found the Colony in this Temper, there was Room to hope from its explicit declarations . . . of Reconciliation." But "the very day after the News reached Us, of the Melancholly Event in the Massachusetts Bay of the 19th of April. . . . astonished by accounts of Acts of Hostility, in the moment of the expectation of Terms of Reconciliation, & now filled with distrust, the Inhabitants of this City burst thro all Restraints on the arrival of the Intelligence from Boston, and instantly emptied the Vessels laden with Provisions for that Place, and then seized the City Arms; and in the course of a few days destributed them among the multitude, formed themselves into Companies and trained openly in the Streets; increased the numbers and Power of the Committee before appointed, to execute the Association of the Continental Congress—Convened themselves by Beat of Drum for Popu-

lar Resolutions—have taken the Keys of the Custom House by Military Force—shut up the Port—drawn a Number of small Cannon into the Country—Called all Parts of the Colony to a Provincial Convention—Chosen twenty delegates for this City—formed an Association, now signing by all Ranks, ingaging submission to Committees and Congresses in firm Union with the rest of the Continent, and openly avow a Resolution, not only to resist the Acts of Parliament complained of as Grievances, but to withhold Succours of all kinds from the Troops, and to repel every species of Force, wherever it may be exerted, for inforcing the Taxing Claims of Parliament, at the Risque of their Lives and Fortunes."

Nowhere is there a more vivid revelation of the "Change of Temper and Conduct (which has entirely prostrated his Majesty's Government in this Province)," nowhere a more striking picture of the effects of the events at Lexington and Concord than in these minutes of the City Council of New York. It is no wonder they conclude that "there cannot be the least Prospect of bringing the assembly to deliberate Consideration of the Earl of Dartmouth's Letter with proposals for conciliation nor . . . any foundation for the most distant hope of accomplishing his Majesty's intentions, if there is any farther Irritations by the Movements of the Army and fresh Effusions of Blood." And though the account which Paul Revere brought of the battle differed no doubt very materially from the official report of the "Attack that happened on the 19 of April, 1775. On his Majesty's Troops by a Number of the People of the Province of Massachusetts Bay" transmitted to Colden by Gage on April 29 expressing his regret at the "unhappy affair," the General's

despatch had neither the wide circulation nor the profound effect of the popular account. It was apparent that the parting of the ways had come.

To all intents and purposes the legal government had now broken down and men were much concerned to find something to take its place, for, as always in such cases, there was danger that "when the political pot boils, the scum rises to the top." The Committee of Sixty did not feel itself empowered to conduct affairs, yet as the only body which had any semblance of authority, it was compelled to act. On April 26 it issued a letter suggesting the formation of a Committee of One Hundred to take over the government of the city and the summoning of a provincial congress to meet in New York on May 22 to administer the province. The next day a list of names for the new committee was proposed, and promptly objected to by the radicals. The proposals of the Committee of Safety offered, at least, a rallying-point for moderate men, whatever their opinions on the relations between Great Britain and the colonies; and to it was added the plea of the more sober leaders. On April 29 Jay, Duane, Alsop, Low, Philip Livingston and Francis Lewis appealed to the City of London to interfere in that dispute; and Jay, Duane and Van Schaack proposed a plan for a new Association. They were "Convinced" not only that "the salvation of the rights and liberties of America depend, under God, on the firm union of its inhabitants," but also "of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend a dissolution of the powers of government." They therefore appealed to the people of New York to follow the recommendations of the Continental and the provincial congresses, to oppose Parliamentary oppression

"until a reconciliation between Great Britain and America . . . can be obtained," and the advice of the General Committee for "the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individuals and private property."

Among the supporters of the new Association were to be found the names of William Walton and John De Lancey, beside those of Isaac Roosevelt and Alexander MacDougall, Janeway, Brinckerhoff and Curtenius, who, with others, represented almost every shade of opinion in New York short of the notorious agitators. While many of these men still opposed independence and still favored the English connection, they feared on the one hand the mob and on the other the collapse of their efforts to secure better terms for America; and so were driven, consciously or unconsciously, along the way which the more radical party prepared. On Monday, May 1, the new bodies were elected by the freeholders and freemen. Fifty-five of the new Committee of One Hundred had been members of the Sixty; seven of the Fifty-One; and the membership included every shade of opinion from extreme loyalism to the most advanced radicalism, though it was dominated by the active element which was coming to direct the destinies and the policy of New York —the moderate-radical bloc. The quorum was fixed at thirty-three; it was reduced to twenty-seven; and that circumstance typifies the difficulties under which it labored.

The day after the news of Lexington there had arrived the conciliatory resolution of Lord North's ministry—too late to have any effect upon the event. Two days after the election of the new committee, the Assembly, whose last Act had been passed on April 3, had met only to be prorogued by the Governor until June 7; and the Committee of

One Hundred thus became in effect the government of the city. It chose Isaac Low its chairman, and began to restore order. It determined to offer the new Association to every one in the province, except Lieutenant-Governor Colden, to be signed; and it began to prepare for war. A night-watch was established; arms and ammunition secured; military exercises enjoined on the people; and ships forbidden to clear for Boston or Halifax. Correspondence by private messengers was carried on with the revolutionary party in the other colonies, and the public mails were opened by the agents of the Committee to prevent communication among those still supporting the government.

The way for the supremacy of the new Committee was cleared somewhat by the adjournment of the Provincial Assembly on May 3. In more senses than one that was a historic event, for the Assembly never met again. Its place was presently taken by the body for which elections were held meanwhile, the Provincial Congress. On the same eventful day that the leaders of New York were framing their new committee, April 28, the Committee of Sixty had sent a circular letter to the counties to urge the choice of deputies to the new body; and throughout the first weeks of May the radicals had been busy selecting the members of this new organ of government. In that they were notably successful, and in that body loyalists had virtually no place. Whether they had deliberately withdrawn or whether they were disorganized and outmanœuvred by their opponents, they no longer played a part in New York politics.

Thus matters stood through May, and John Adams, passing through the city again on his way to the second Continental Congress, observed a very different spirit abroad in

the town "which had swayed so strongly one way in the autumn, now swayed with equal impetus to the other side." There was no longer any hope of keeping her out of the Union. The militia were all in arms, and "almost the whole city was out to meet the delegates." The Tories were "put to flight," and "humbled in the dust," and Dr. Cooper had fled to a man-of-war.

To the loyalist eyes of Judge Jones the occasion naturally presented itself in a somewhat different light. "In the beginning of May," he writes, "the Eastern delegates arrived at New York on the way to Philadelphia. Upon this occasion all the republican faction was summoned, the mob collected, the rabble turned out, and the companies that had been raised for the avowed purpose of rebellion, and armed with muskets stolen from the arsenal, were mustered; and this motley assemblage marched near seven miles out of town, and conducted the delegates into the city amidst the shouts, noise, hurraing and riot, necessarily attending such a tumultuous concourse of people, escorted by a grenadier company under the command of one Lasher, a German shoemaker of the lowest extraction, and an independent company of fusileers, then lately raised for the service of Congress, and commanded by one Rudolphus Ritzema, attorney at law.

"The next morning all the principal heads and leaders of the presbyterian faction and republican party in New York . . . with a number of other fomenters and demagogues of rebellion, waited upon these eastern gentry to welcome them to New York, to wish them success in the great, glorious, and arduous cause in which they were embarked; and particularly to congratulate John Hancock and Samuel Adams (two of them) on their great, marvellous, and provi-

dential escape from the vengeance of the royal army, those 'savage, cruel, and inhuman butchers,' as they now affected to call the British troops. These gentlemen having made it a point to propagate at every stage from Boston to New York a report that the party attacked at Lexington was purposely sent by General Gage to seize the said Hancock and Adams, in order to send them to England for trial as traitors, this report, false as it was, had an amazing influence on the minds of the common people, especially in the New England provinces, and tended to irritate them as much against Great Britain and the royal army then in Boston, as any one falsehood that had been previously circulated thereto for that purpose, of which God knows there were enough."

Adams and his fellow patriots—or conspirators Judge Jones would have called them—had, in fact, succeeded. Though they probably did not know it, they had followed the dictum of William III, who observed that the great difficulty was to get the English engaged in a quarrel, that, once blows were struck, they would fight of themselves. The collision had been produced at Lexington; thereafter there was little question that there would be some sort of armed conflict. It remained to be seen whether it would be merely between the Old and the New Englanders, or whether the other colonies would support the latter. The conflict was, in fact, already spreading; for at almost precisely the same moment that the New England delegates were being entertained in New York, the so-called Green Mountain Boys under Allen, Warner and Barker were engaged in surprising the garrisons of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, thus bringing war a step nearer.

What side would the people of New York take? The list

of names of the "presbyterian faction and republican party" which welcomed the New England delegates indicates something of the division in the city, yet, viewed in the light of events both before and after this celebration, it seems odd enough. There were, of course, Sears and MacDougall, John Morin Scott and Philip Livingston. There were the two Presbyterian parsons, Rogers and Treat, Laidly of the English Dutch Church, Mason of the Seceders, Livingston of the North Dutch Church"; there were P. V. B. and Peter R. Livingston; William, Thomas and Joshua Hett Smith; and there were Isaac Low, James Duane and John Jay. Almost if not quite every element opposed to the policy of the British government, on whatever ground, thus joined in this celebration.

Yet, oddly enough, that celebration was connected with the exploit of the Green Mountain Boys through some members of this very group—though not, perhaps, in a way which might have been anticipated. For Allen, Warner and Barker were the heads of the settlers who claimed their lands under New Hampshire, as opposed to those who claimed that the lands in dispute belonged to New York. A year earlier the New York grantees—Duane, Scott, Thomas Smith, William Livingston and Leonard Lispenard at their head—had secured from the New York Assembly an act declaring Allen, Warner and Barker "traitors and outlaws," and a proclamation from the governor offering a reward of £500 for their arrest. So in May, 1775, the proclaimed outlaws sent the colors they had captured to the Congress whither the New England delegates were making their way, cheered on by the very men who had secured a decree of outlawry against those who were now providing supplies as

well as prisoners to the cause which each for the moment supported. Politics, it has been rightly said, makes strange bedfellows; and the royalist historian does not fail to note the fact. Nor was it only Judge Jones, nor even the New York grantees, who disliked the captor of Ticonderoga. Years later the famous diarist-president of Yale, Ezra Stiles, recorded in his diary, "13th Inst. died in Vermont the profane and impious Deist Gen. Ethan Allen. . . . And in Hell he lifts up his Eyes being in Torments."

For the moment, however, all these petty differences were sunk, and the delegates to the Continental Congress having been speeded on their way, on May 22 the revolutionary government of New York was finally organized with the meeting of the first Provincial Congress. Though it contained men like Isaac Low and James De Lancey, who attended regularly, still hoping to keep New York out of revolution, its active element—men like Sears and MacDougall, Scott and Gouverneur Morris—strongly dominated the Congress. To it the Committee of One Hundred virtually delegated its powers; and it became, in fact, the chief authority of the city as well as of the province. It was, in effect, a revolutionary body; but it was not fully committed to the cause of armed resistance even yet. While it approved the Association, the young Gouverneur Morris carried against the opposition of Lamb and MacDougall a plan of conciliation based on Parliament's right to control trade while the right to grant money to the British treasury remained in the hands of provincial assemblies or a general congress—despite the fact that he also proposed the issue of paper money, or "continental currency" as it came to be called.

Yet, like the Committee of One Hundred, the Provincial

Congress found the problem of maintaining a quorum in the face of preparations for war extremely difficult. It presently became impossible; and on July 8 it resigned its powers to a Committee of Safety. This marks the passage of New York into the revolutionary movement, and the triumph of those who had so long striven to that end. Yet even in their triumph the radicals were not completely dominant. It is a matter of more than curious interest that the Committee of One Hundred was presided over by the man who had been rejected as a delegate to the second Continental Congress on account of his conservatism, Isaac Low, and that both it and the Association were sponsored by men like Duane and Jay, whose names appear both by the side of those of Lamb and MacDougall in the latter, and also as the authors of a last proposal for conciliation in the Continental Congress. Yet the position of the element they represented was not as anomalous as it seemed. Their policy was clear. It was to assert American rights to the utmost, short of rebellion; and at the same time to discourage by every means in their power those exhibitions of mob violence which made compromise increasingly difficult. In this they failed, for they could not control the radicals who at this critical juncture engaged in enterprises which made compromise all but impossible.

Before the Sons of Liberty were finally merged in the greater revolutionary movement, they had carried out various attacks upon British authority and property under the lead of Lamb, in early May. The climax of these adventures came in New York itself, to which Gage had written on May 7, to the New York commandant, Major Hamilton of the 18th Royal Irish regiment, that "it would be a proper measure that the

five companies should go aboard the *Asia*." At the very moment that the Provincial Congress was taking over control of affairs in New York, the British troops in the fort were ordered to join the army in Boston. "The timid disposition of the Committee" of One Hundred, in the words of the principal actor in the ensuing scene, "caused them to suppose" that the troops could not be taken prisoner without loss of many lives, and, in consequence, the troops, with the permission of the Committee, set out for their transport about ten o'clock on the morning of June 6th. A little group of patriots who met at the public-house kept by Mr. Jasper Drake on Water Street, near Beekman Slip, decided to interfere. They hastened to summon their comrades to their assistance. One of them, Mr., afterward Colonel, Marinus Willett, sometime a lieutenant in Abercrombie's army, and recently active in the public disturbances which had so alarmed the city authorities, met the troops at the corner of Broadway and Beaver Street. There, supported by the crowd which had assembled, he stopped the carts loaded with arms, and informed the commander that the Committee's permission to depart did not extend to carrying away more than the arms they bore. The Mayor appeared and diverted the attention of the officer; the crowd interfered; the carts were turned aside; one of the British soldiers answered the appeal made to the troops to desert; and soldier and arms were thus triumphantly carried off.

These were almost, if not quite, the last overt acts of the old Sons of Liberty before the Revolution proper. The revolutionary organization was now approaching completion. The Provincial Congress, acting through the Committee of Safety, enforced the Association. Loyalists were imprisoned.

Enlistment in the British army was forbidden; communication with the British authorities was cut off; guns, ammunition and supplies secured; plans laid to fortify the town; minute-men summoned; and paper money issued. Meanwhile the second Continental Congress had pursued a not dissimilar course. It had established what was virtually an independent government; made provisions for raising troops; taken measures to enforce its authority; and even begun a movement to establish its position abroad. It appointed George Washington commander-in-chief for the American army then gathered and gathering about Boston to besiege the British forces there; authorized the issue of paper currency—for, like the provincial congresses, it was chary of risking its position and its popularity by levying taxes—and generally it comported itself as any actual revolutionary body might.

The British authorities correspondingly retired into the background. Colden withdrew to his farm and gave up all thought of governing. Though the moderates still strove feverishly to find some means of accommodation with the mother-country; though the pretense of loyalty was maintained, and pushed at times to almost ridiculous lengths; it was, as every serious man was coming to realize, merely a pretense. For in this summer of 1775 it was idle to pretend that Great Britain and America were not at war. Were there no other evidence, British troops were besieged in Boston by an American army which increased in numbers almost from day to day; and in nearly every colony preparations were being hurried forward for continuance of hostilities. None the less Jay moved a second petition to the King in the Continental Congress, seconded strongly by Duane.

Congress denounced the efforts then being made in New York for the invasion of Canada, though ordering the fortification of Manhattan Island, the Hudson and Lake George; and Jay addressed his fellow New Yorkers to ask their cooperation with the other colonies. Amid all these conflicting issues one thing was increasingly evident. The preliminaries of the American Revolution were, in fact, over; the real play had begun in this late spring of 1775, and in that play New York was to have a considerable part.

Yet it must not be imagined that all this went on without some protest from the loyalists. In April 1775 there had met a group of these at White Plains to sign such a protest against "all unlawful congresses and committees"; and between one of its leaders, the able and accomplished controversialist, Seabury, graduate of Yale and rector of St. Peter's, Westchester, and his collaborator Wilkins, and the young Alexander Hamilton, there had raged a violent paper war. To the former's strictures on the Congress in his *Westchester Farmer's Tracts,* Hamilton had replied in his *Full Vindication . . . of the Congress,* and his *Farmer Refuted;* all to the complete satisfaction of their respective partisans. But Hamilton's followers were triumphant over the loyalist pamphleteer; for presently they arrested him, sent him to what was becoming a detention camp for loyalists—Connecticut. Thence he finally made his way into the British lines and ultimately to the chaplainship of the King's American regiment, composed of loyalists like himself; and so, in course of years, to consecration as the first bishop of the Episcopal church in the United States.

His career involves one of the most difficult of all problems connected with the conflict now approaching—that of

the party which was opposed to separation from Great Britain, the so-called "Tories." Upon their heads has been visited the usual result of taking the defeated side—abuse and oblivion. They have not even had the consolations of the romantic halo which encircles the adherents of many lost causes like that of the English Cavaliers and the Southern leaders. The inexorable logic of events proved that they were wrong—for did they not lose the fight? Yet a more generous attitude might now be taken; for they, too, were Americans, and it would seem that they were surely as much entitled to that slender compliment of recollection as the leaders of the Confederacy. For one reason, if no other, they need consideration—that reason is the truth of history.

As we consider the general aspects of the movement which led to revolution in New York as elsewhere, it is apparent that it was a curious complex of motive and action, not a straightforward, spontaneous trend toward independence. This circumstance has given rise to the divergent views held of that great event then and since. To the men who directed the affairs of New York, many of the ideas and the activities of the more advanced "radical" element at no time made any great appeal. To the British authorities and the loyalists, to many of the conservatives, and even to some of the moderates who ultimately cast their lot in with the revolutionary movement, it seemed that many of those who were foremost in urging on the radical cause were mere self-seekers or self-advertisers. To the mass of the followers of the popular leaders, and to the most ardent champions of the patriotic school, then and since, the directors of the revolutionary movement have appeared as the apostles of a new gospel, high-minded, self-sacrificing heroes, and their

opponents the enemies of liberty and America alike. Whatever their opinions regarding independence, it is apparent that those who directed the destinies of New York were determined, and, on the whole, successful, in suppressing the more violent manifestations of the restless element as represented by the Sons of Liberty; and at the time that element suffered as much public disapproval of their actions as the conservatives have since endured. On the other hand, the conservatives, even the moderates, much more the loyalists, have had their attitude interpreted as greatly to their disadvantage by patriotic historians as the violence of the revolutionaries was condemned by their less radical contemporaries.

One need not profess to believe that we live in the best of all possible worlds, or that all things have worked together for good since the beginning of things, even in the United States. Least of all need one find something to commend in all parties to every dispute. Yet it seems that there is, in this case, much to be said for each side without prejudice to the other and without falling into the error of indiscriminate praise and national self-glorification. The question of the separation of England from America was no simple, clear-cut issue on which all honest and right-thinking men must naturally agree. It was one on which men might differ without suspicion of their honesty of conviction and motives. Men did so differ throughout the colonies; and nowhere more than in New York. There, as elsewhere, they were affected, as all men are affected at all times, and under all circumstances, by their interests. It is neither the part of truth nor of wisdom to magnify one side at the expense of the other in describing the events which led to independence.

One may accord to the movers in this great revolution every meed of praise without admitting that in every instance their actions were directed by wholly altruistic motives, or denouncing as selfish and interested reactionaries those who sought to find some means of accommodation. It has been easy for some writers to make heroes of John Lamb and Isaac Sears. It is not difficult for any of us to respect men like John Morin Scott and his co-workers. But it is hard to denounce men like John Alsop or John Jay who, perhaps more than any other man, represented the serious moderate view which was the peculiar characteristic of New York, and who strove to the very end to find means of settling the great controversy without resort to force. Nor were men like Jay alone. In Pennsylvania, John Dickinson, the "Penman of the Revolution"; author of the *Farmer's Letters,* which more than any other single contribution embodied the colonial argument, of the *Petition to the King,* and the *Address to the People of Canada;* member of the Stamp Act Congress and the Continental Congresses—even he refused to sign the Declaration of Independence. Yet he became a general in the militia of his state and, like Jay, an influential member of the Constitutional Convention of 1789. On the other hand, John Alsop, who had been an active member of all bodies from the Committee of Fifty-One to the second Continental Congress, withdrew to his home in Middletown, Connecticut, after the Declaration of Independence and thereafter played no part in public affairs. "As long as a door was left open for a reconciliation with Great Britain, upon just and honorable terms," he wrote, "I was willing to render my country all the service in my power . . . but as you have, I presume, closed the door . . . I must beg leave to resign."

Finally, if we are to condemn unreservedly all those who refused to take the last step—independence—what are we to make of men like Isaac Low? Active in every movement which made for sound government, and no less active in those seeking the rights of America against the British policy; trusted by his fellows to an extraordinary degree; almost the permanent presiding officer of New York in this disturbed period; he rejected independence as a solution. He was condemned for "treasonable communications"; he died an exile in England, his property confiscated and his name proscribed. "If this be treason, make the most of it"—as Patrick Henry would not have said. It was no easy choice. Isaac Low's brother Nicholas embraced the "patriot" cause; Gouverneur Morris's half-brother was a major in the British army; and every tie was cut across in this great division of opinion. It divided friend from friend, family from family. The last meeting of the "Social Club" in New York was a sad occasion. Men associated closely in friendship, in business, in marriage, even in blood, parted company in many cases forever, each following his conscience.

It has been fashionable to denounce not merely the loyalists who clung to Great Britain, but those who slowly and reluctantly took sides finally with the revolutionary party. It has been popular to decry them and their vacillating minds; to minimize their efforts in comparison with those bolder and more forward spirits who from the beginning looked to separation from Great Britain. Yet it requires no profound knowledge of events to see that the choice between compromise and war was not an easy one. It was only by degrees that Washington himself was engaged in the great controversy. Without the adherence of such men the Ameri-

can cause would have been hopeless; its success inconceivable. And not in war alone; for it may be observed that without the activities of such men as Jay and R. R. Livingston, with their colleagues from other states, John Adams, Madison, James Wilson, led by Washington, the establishment of sound government in the United States would have been impossible, certainly in the hands of the extremists, as the later careers of Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry proved. And no revolution is ever successful until it has set up a new order to replace the old.

In this great movement each element had its place. Without the agitators, the Sons of Liberty, and the element which they represented, there would doubtless have been no Declaration of Independence, no Revolution, and no democracy. Without their opponents there would have been no federal government, no Constitution, and no such government as we now possess. In that the Sons of Liberty inserted the principle of popular rights and political equality. To these the party of Jay and Livingston and Hamilton added the doctrines of strong and stable administration, of law and order and of national unity. From the combination of those divergent and often antagonistic elements proceeded, therefore, not merely such chaotic independence as the United States endured under the Articles of Confederation, but national existence such as it has enjoyed under the Constitution—"Liberty and Union, one and inseparable, now and forever!"

Nothing, in fact, better illustrates this than the later careers of those involved in this great controversy. With few or no exceptions, the agitators were never honored by their countrymen with high office, once independence was

achieved. Lamb rose to the dignity of a State senator and the collectorship of customs of New York; MacDougall died as the supercargo of a trading ship in China; Sears in no less obscurity. Sullivan, Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry never rose beyond the "presidency" or the governorship of their respective states, and Adams had the mortification of seeing Hancock preferred to him even there. On the other hand the names of Jay and Hamilton, even that of Burr, became of national and even international significance; and Washington, John Adams and Jefferson rose in succession to the Presidency of the United States.

CHAPTER VII

The Struggle for New York, 1775

SUNDAY, June 25th, 1775, was a notable day in the annals of the City of New York, which, for a moment, became a symbol of the revolutionary movement then under way throughout America. The War of the American Revolution had begun. Two months earlier the battles—or skirmishes—of Concord and Lexington had taken place, and since that time the "radical" or "patriot" party had strained every nerve to complete its preparations for the great conflict which had resulted from their opposition to the policy of the home government. From every colony men and supplies had been hurried forward to strengthen the forces which had gathered to the siege of Boston after the struggle at Lexington. Royal forts and arsenals everywhere had been seized and rifled of their arms and ammunition; troops raised. Ticonderoga and Crown Point—the keys of the way to and from Canada—had been captured by the revolutionaries.

A week earlier the battle of Bunker Hill had been fought, and the news of it was making its way through the country, heightening the spirit of those committed to the cause of American liberty. The second Continental Congress, in Philadelphia, had been in session for a month or more, devising ways and means to further the cause in which it was embarked. Provincial or "state" congresses or conventions were

coming into being. City and county committees stood prepared to carry on the task of local government; and their authority, like that of the congresses, was generally recognized as having succeeded that of the royal officials in nearly every part of the colonies. Revolutionary organization in this early summer of 1775 was now all but complete and was prepared to fight. And to crown its work and define its position, the Continental Congress, which had met on the day that Ticonderoga came into American hands, had authorized the organization of the forces about Boston as the "continental army," and named George Washington of Virginia as commander-in-chief.

In this movement New York had played its part. Its "radical" or "patriot" element, as we have seen, had seized the cannon and supplies in all the forts and storehouses about the city save in Fort George itself, and they had atoned for that by taking the surplus arms and ammunition from the fort's garrison as it had marched away three weeks before. The regiment and the company of artillery which were New York's quota for the continental army were now being formed, largely from those "active citizens" who had been equipped with the guns taken from the arsenal. The New York delegates were playing their part in the Continental Congress. The New York Provincial Congress beginning on May 23, 1775, sat at the "Exchange" when it could command a quorum—which was not often, for many of its members were engaged elsewhere. The New York Committee of One Hundred administered local affairs as best it could; and each body functioned, as the acting governor, Colden wrote, "with all the confidence and authority of legal government." For in New York, as in the colonies

generally, the extra-legal organization which had grown up slowly through the years of opposition to British authority had now attained the position and power of a recognized administration.

The old lieutenant-governor was naturally in despair. For more than a year his superior, Governor Tryon, had been abroad; and, deprived of even the slight support which the little handful of troops had afforded him, he stood face to face with organized rebellion which he was powerless to check. But if he was discouraged and dismayed, the more serious spirits among the new masters of affairs were scarcely less perplexed. Despite their valiant front and their preparations for conflict, they found themselves in a position far more difficult than that of the fighting-men, whose course was clear enough. The authority of the Continental Congress was not only unrecognized by any foreign power and rejected by England, as pure rebellion, but it was accepted by only a portion of the colonists themselves, for the loyalist party was still numerous and powerful. Neither continental nor provincial congresses dared impose taxes; they still treated British officials with respect; and while they moved toward war, they left ways open to negotiate.

This situation was typified in extraordinary fashion on this particular Sunday in June 1775 by the perplexing position in which New York's Provincial Congress found itself. It had been advised that General Washington, then on his way to take command of the revolutionary army about Boston, would spend the night in New York; and, by a curious and most unfortunate coincidence from the standpoint of the members of the congress, the long absent royal Governor Tryon was expected to return on the same day. Full

recognition of either guest, or neglect of either, was not only certain to antagonize one or the other of the factions into which the people were divided, and perhaps produce a collision; but upon the attitude adopted by the Congress depended, in no small measure, the future course of the city and colony. And while the Provincial Congress was a revolutionary body, while it was preparing for war as rapidly as its limited powers permitted, that war, as yet, was, in the minds of many men, not a struggle for full independence but a threat to compel the recognition of American rights by the home government. If that threat failed, the position of the Congress might, conceivably, be difficult. Its members were prudent men and they took a prudent course. They ordered one body of militia to meet the General, and another to meet the Governor; and directed the commanders of each detachment to handle the situation, in their own words, "as well as the circumstances would allow."

Fortunately for them, Tryon, with all the qualities which have given him an evil name in American history, was not insensible to the desirability of avoiding a disturbance at this particular juncture in affairs. Advised of the delicate position in which the city found itself, he delayed his coming and so avoided a collision. Washington arrived about four in the afternoon, escorted by the Philadelphia light horse. He landed at Colonel Lispenard's at the foot of West Street, where he was met by nine companies of militia, and members of the Provincial Congress, and, amid the cheering of the crowds and the ringing of bells, he made his way to his quarters for the night. His first act as commander-in-chief was performed in New York, and was characteristic of the situation. He placed Philip Schuyler, who had just

been created one of four major-generals by Congress, in command of the New York militia, with special orders to "keep a watchful eye on Governor Tryon." Meanwhile the Governor waited with such patience as he might until evening for his advent. He was met by the city authorities and a company of militia, and was escorted by them to Mr. Hugh Wallace's house on Broadway, welcomed, or at least observed, by many of those who had greeted Washington a few hours earlier.

Such was the peculiar and striking circumstance which ushered in the Revolution in New York, a circumstance which, as events were to prove, was typical of the history of the city throughout the greater part of the ensuing period. It was still further emphasized on the next day when Washington visited the Provincial Congress to discuss the military aspects of the situation; for he was addressed by that body in language which reflected not only their difficult position but their moderate sentiments. They acclaimed him, indeed, as their leader, but ventured to express the hope that, if accommodation with the English government could be attained, he would cheerfully resign his trust and become once more a private citizen. To this the General agreed, but added that, "having once drawn the sword, he did not expect to sheathe it without establishing American liberty on its most firm and solid foundations"; and with these words he took up his journey to Cambridge, leaving New York to work out its salvation as best it could.

That task was not an easy one for those in authority, whether royal governor, or provincial congress, or city authorities. New York had long been noted for its factions and its feuds: De Lancey against Livingston; Episcopalian

against Presbyterian and Congregationalist; mercantile element against artisan; landed proprietor against city; and with the injection of a revolutionary issue, was added to these loyalist against patriot. The events of the preceding months had thrown the balance against the conservative element which for years had controlled New York politics, and had given command of affairs largely into the hands of their old antagonists, the Livingston party. But the conservative element was still strong, and, though for the moment overborne by the radicals, it still had a considerable voice in New York affairs, and still entertained hopes of accommodation with the home government, and a return to something like the old state of affairs.

This was apparent, among other things, in the compromise which the Provincial Congress or, as it called itself, the "Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York," drew up for the consideration of the Continental Congress, and in its relations to the general body. On the first day of its session, July 9, 1776, it refused to pass resolutions which delimited the authority of the general and the provincial assemblies; and it hesitated to enact any measures which would seem to make a withdrawal from its preparations impossible. Moreover its members devised a plan which was a typical expression of New York's attitude. That plan demanded the repeal of the restrictive and punitive acts of Parliament, assurances of self-government and taxation within the colonies, leaving trade regulation to the English authorities; and agreed to requisitions of money and men for colonial defense, either by vote of the separate provinces, or through a Congress presided over by an officer "deputed by the several colonies." Described as "hasty, care-

lessly prepared, and far from conciliatory," this plan was, none the less, not unlike that in force later throughout the British Empire. In comparison with the extreme utterances on either side, it seems statesmanlike in its proposals, even though it received little or no attention from the Continental Congress, then busy with so many other and more militant activities.

The most surprising thing about this plan is that it was passed by a body whose list of members contained the names of men like Lamb and MacDougall—who, in fact, opposed the whole programme. But the reason is not far to seek. The "radicals" were too busy with other things to pay much attention to what they more or less correctly believed to be the fruitless and non-essential efforts at compromise; for they were entering the army. MacDougall, owing to his political experience and prominence, was made colonel of the first New York regiment, authorized by the Continental Congress, while Scott, Lamb, Willett and Mott secured captains' commissions in the same force. The ensuing weeks were spent in hurried preparation of their commands for the service. The royal governor took up what he described as his "ignoble situation," and the Provincial Congress endeavored to walk the narrow path which lay between existing peace and the oncoming war.

From day to day that feat became more and more difficult. On the night of August 23, Lamb's artillery company, with a crowd of sympathizers, acting under orders of the Congress of which he was a member, proceeded to take possession of the guns on the Battery, left unguarded by the departure of the British garrison. They were detected by the crew of the man-of-war *Asia,* which had been lying in

the harbor since May, and fired upon. They took the guns away; but the affair brought Governor Tryon back to the city, and a meeting of the corporation with representatives of the city committee and the Provincial Congress agreed that the war material should remain untouched, and that the *Asia* should be furnished with stores by private boats so that its barges would not provoke attack. One of those barges which had been destroyed by rioters was replaced; the guard about the Governor's house was doubled, and precautions were taken against renewal of mob violence.

But it was evident that this could not last. In July the Continental Congress had petitioned Parliament for redress of grievance; but the British government refused to receive petitions from men in arms; and though half a dozen colonies, including New York, disclaimed the idea of independence, the war went on with increasing impetus. The siege of Boston continued; the men of Marblehead organized a little fleet of fishing-vessels to harass the British supply-ships. On September 10, a month after General Howe succeeded Gage as commander-in-chief of the British armies, a force of Americans, under Montgomery and Arnold, in which Schuyler and Lamb's command were numbered, landed at St. John's bent on the conquest of Canada. On November 19 they captured Montreal. By the end of the month they had invested Quebec; and began the siege of "the Gibraltar of America," which promised to parallel the beleaguerment of Boston during that winter of 1775–6. Though that promise was defeated by their failure to storm the place on December 31, the death of Montgomery, the wounding of Arnold, and the collapse of their effort to gain Canada, none the less, as Tryon wrote, "every day pro-

duced fresh proof of a determined spirit of resistance. The Americans from politicians are becoming soldiers."

Even when he wrote these words the New York governor was already, in a sense, a fugitive. Privately advised that the Continental Congress had recommended the local authorities to seize his person, he removed on October 19 to the packet *Halifax,* thence to the *Duchess of Gordon,* which now lay in the harbor. At the same time many New Yorkers, including various members of the Provincial Congress, disturbed by the rioting and plundering, which the city officials tried in vain to suppress, and fearful of bombardment by the little British squadron, fled from a place which now began to feel the first effects of war. That war was rapidly approaching the city no one could doubt. The Continental Congress had ordered Stirling to garrison the forts on the Hudson, and his New Jersey troops were even then disarming loyalists in Queen's County on Long Island and converging on New York. The Provincial Congress rejected Tryon's proposal for a separate petition to Great Britain, confirmed the powers of the Continental Congress and full executive authority to the New York Committee of Safety. This done, the Provincial Congress, which had long lacked a quorum and had done business without that formality, adjourned indefinitely on the 4th of November. Immediately preparations were made, amid a strong reaction against the revolutionary spirit, to hold elections for a new body of provincial deputies, while the still existing authorities in the city occupied themselves in trying to keep some semblance of order amid the general chaos.

The storm of war was gathering as every one perceived; yet, to some minds, as always, it still seemed possible to

avert it, and though these warlike preparations produced counter-preparations, for the moment the chief concern was still political. The elections for the new Provincial Congress had been set for November 7; but on the day set for its assembling only nine of fourteen counties of the province had made any choice of deputies, and there was doubt about some of those who had been chosen. On the other hand the city election was not held until three days after the time set for the meeting of the Congress owing to a controversy between the moderates and the radicals over the list of names of candidates. Even when these scattered delegations had been chosen and some of their members had appeared, nothing happened until December 1. Then twenty-three faithful deputies out of the seventy-four chosen, having appealed in vain time and again to their reluctant colleagues to appear, began to organize after a fashion, and sent out a last despairing call to the slackers to help them to prevent military government or mob anarch

Their task was not lightened by the activities of the "radicals," whose leaders were, in fact, most anxious to prevent a return of quiet, which they naturally, and no doubt correctly, believed threatened their cause. Among the efforts to prevent this subsidence into peace the most exciting episode was the expedition of Isaac Sears with sixteen men from New Haven in late November, 1775. Joined by some eighty men from Westchester County, this raiding party arrested a number of loyalists, including their great pamphleteer, Seabury, and sent them back into Connecticut. Thence they proceeded to New York, where they were welcomed by the mob, attacked the printing-office of James Rivington in broad daylight, broke his presses, and threw the type into

the river or carried it back to New Haven. At the same time the supplying of the royal ships with provisions caused intermittent outbreaks of violence; and it was evident from these events that the force party was rapidly and intentionally making the position of the moderates impossible.

The Committee of Safety denounced the actions of Sears and his followers and petitioned the Provincial Congress for redress. The Congress wrote a letter to Governor Trumbull of Connecticut and sent a copy of it to the Continental Congress. Some months later Trumbull replied that as Sears was a member of the New York Provincial Congress, his expedition could hardly be considered an invasion from Connecticut, as was charged. Rivington, failing satisfaction from that quarter, petitioned the Continental Congress for protection and compensation. But long before his petition and protest could be acted upon, affairs had taken a turn which, as Trumbull doubtless realized, put Rivington's case beyond the power of even the Continental Congress to adjudicate.

For while the radicals pressed toward a breach with Great Britain, and the New York City Council—if one may judge from its minutes—spent its time in voting sums for the lighting of the town, Parliament was passing the army estimates for a campaign in America, and the British government, unable to secure forces from the British Isles, was planning the despatch of agents to the continent. There they secured some 17,000 Hessians, Brunswickers and Hanauers to reinforce the troops from Britain. Meanwhile the commanders of the Boston garrison were laying plans for subduing American resistance. Those plans, as finally adopted, contemplated an expedition from Canada, led by

Carleton, to co-operate with a force under Howe which was to occupy New York; the severance of New England from the other colonies, and an expedition from England under Cornwallis and Admiral Parker to subdue the south. Cornwallis was sent to England to organize his new command; and a force embodied from the troops in Boston which, under Clinton's lead, was to co-operate with the Cornwallis-Parker expedition in the spring.

Thus during the very days of the succeeding spring, when Rivington was petitioning for redress, the war began in form, with Washington's army driving the British from Boston and Carleton's advancing to Lake Champlain. Under such circumstances Sears' raid and its results sank into insignificance.

Meanwhile there had appeared a pamphlet "Common Sense," written by one Thomas Paine, who had come to America under Franklin's auspices scarcely more than a year before. It was a powerful plea for war and independence; and, though it seemed a feeble retort to British armaments, it was "worth an army corps to America."

"Society," Paine begins in the best eighteenth-century manner, "is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness . . . and even in the best state is a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one." Especially the government of England which, combining the "base remains of two ancient tyrannies," monarchy and aristocracy, is supported "more from national pride than reason." From it the time has come to separate. "Everything that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries 'TIS TIME TO PART." "The authority of Great Britain over this continent, is a form of

government, which sooner or later must have an end." And why not now? "He who takes nature for his guide is not easily beaten out of his argument, and on that ground, I answer *generally—that* INDEPENDENCE, *being a* SINGLE, SIMPLE LINE, *contained within ourselves; and Reconciliation, a matter extremely perplexed and complicated, and in which a treacherous, capricious court is to interfere, gives the answer without a doubt.*"

Moreover the situation of affairs demands immediate and strong action. "The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of reflection," he goes on to say. "Without law, without government, without any other mode of power than what is founded on and granted by, courtesy. Held together by an unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which is nevertheless subject to change, and which every secret enemy is endeavoring to dissolve, our present condition is Legislation without law; wisdom without a plan; a constitution without a name; and, what is strangely astonishing, perfect Independence contending for dependence. The instance is without a precedent; the case never existed before, and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced system of things. The mind of the multitude is left at random; and seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion starts. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason; wherefore, everyone thinks himself at liberty to act as he pleases."

And what, he asks, in effect, are you afraid of? "Our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of the whole world"; "debts we have none; and whatever we may con-

tract on this acount will serve as a glorious memento of our virtue." "No country on the globe is so happily situated, or so internally capable of raising a fleet as America." "In almost every article of defense we abound. Hemp [for cordage] flourishes to rankness . . . our iron is superior to that of other countries. Our small arms equal to any in the world. Saltpetre and gunpowder we are every day producing. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Resolution is our inherent character and courage hath never yet forsaken us." "The present time is the true time for establishing" union, and "that peculiar time, which never happens to a nation but once, viz. the time of forming itself into a government."

Such was the battle-cry of the revolutionary party. It was not unanswered; and the New York loyalists, in particular, were quick to take up the challenge. They prepared a reply with great pains—but it was destined not to see the light of print. The publisher Loudon, though a good patriot, undertook to print it; he advertised its forthcoming appearance in the newspapers; and, thus advised, a group of more daring spirits, including Lamb, MacDougall and Sears, met at the tavern of Sears' father-in-law, Jasper Drake, which had witnessed many such gatherings. Thence they went to Loudon's house, seized and destroyed all printed copies of the pamphlet, together with the original manuscript, and so left the field clear for Paine's arguments. Moreover they notified every New York printer to this effect.

"Sir, if you print, or suffer to be printed in your press anything against the rights and liberties of America, or in favour of our inveterate foes, the King, Ministry, and Parlia-

ment of Great Britain, death and destruction, ruin and perdition, shall be your portion."

Signed by order of the committee of tarring and feathering.

LEGION."

This, like the Rivington case, evidenced the sharpening of controversy into an appeal to force. Thus as the British pushed forward their warlike preparations the colonists were encouraged to resist; and while the government prepared to enforce obedience the Americans prepared to fight. In New York, as a result of the feverish efforts of the city delegates, some twenty-seven members of the second Provincial Congress were brought together—a third of them from the city—and, confronted with the virtual impossibility of maintaining a quorum under such conditions, even by paying the attending members five dollars a day; after sixteen days, the Provincial Congress resigned its authority to a Committee of Safety, empowered to sit until dissolved, or until the second Tuesday in June 1776. The Committee of Safety included MacDougall, Scott, Livingston, Brasher, and eight others, five from the city. Entrusted with the conduct of revolutionary affairs in the province it found itself faced with the same difficulty of maintaining a sufficient attendance to do business; did not, in fact, achieve that result until January 3. It sat some six weeks, never with more than eight members present. Then its place was taken again by the Provincial Congress, which sat a month in February and March, and once more resigned its powers to a second Committee of Safety. Meanwhile the city committee, which administered local affairs,

carried on its existence in the same desultory and unsatisfactory fashion, to the great disgust of the New York members in the Continental Congress and the faithful everywhere.

The reasons for this situation were twofold. More immediately there was the strength of the loyalists. Queens and Richmond counties voted not to send delegates to the Provincial Congress—the latter by an overwhelming majority. Though the patriots of Queens County, whose opponents, it was learned, were being supplied with arms from the *Asia,* put its inhabitants who had voted against sending deputies under the ban, and "indicted" all commerce with them, this was but a gesture. Taking heart of grace from this loyalist spirit, Governor Tryon addressed an open letter to the people of the colony, in which he suggested, indirectly, a new popular vote looking toward another effort to influence Parliament. A caucus of the members of the Provincial Congress favorable to such a plan was held; resolutions in regard to reconciliation were framed and presented to the Continental Congress, but in such form, when presently amended by the Provincial Congress, as made them impossible.

There was one weapon left—the Assembly. On January 1 Governor Tryon had dissolved the old Assembly and issued writs for a new election, returnable on February 14. The Committee of Safety, much alarmed by this revival of loyalism and of a body they thought safely buried under the revolutionary movement, took steps to check or divert the loyalist reaction. The new elections attracted little interest. On February 14 thirty representatives appeared—and of them nearly one-half were members of the Provincial Congress as well, revealing the adroit management of the radi-

cals who had thus spiked the last of the governor's guns. That congress had met on February 12, two days before the Assembly; and there were now two bodies in New York, each entrusted with a somewhat doubtful authority to take measures for the government of the province. Under almost any other circumstances a collision might have accompanied this peculiarly unfortuitous concurrence of rival powers. But events outside the realm of New York politics had already turned this comedy of representation into an empty farce. While appeal and counter-appeal, election and counter-election, had vexed the peace of the province, the realities of war had approached the city, and, with the assembling of the politicians, came the more ominous appearance of the fighting-men.

For Washington, advised of the preparation of Clinton's expedition, believed that it was destined for New York; and urged Congress in January to secure that city with New Jersey troops. When it seemed that Congress would not move in time or would not move at all, he took another step. General Charles Lee, petitioning to be allowed the honor of defending New York, was detached for that service, and hastened to his post, picking up two regiments of six-weeks volunteers in Connecticut on his way. At the Connecticut border, however, he was stopped by letters from the New York Committee of Safety, fearful that, with British ships in the harbor and a strong loyalist body in the town, the city might be lost to the revolutionary cause by too precipitate action. Meanwhile they advised him that they were preparing for the eventuality of war. They had, they said, sent for more powder; they possessed entrenching tools, provisions for 5,000 men for a month and six brass field-pieces; they were

making carriages for their other guns, and raising a company of artillery. Thus advised, Lee and his men waited with what patience they could muster till these preparations were more nearly complete.

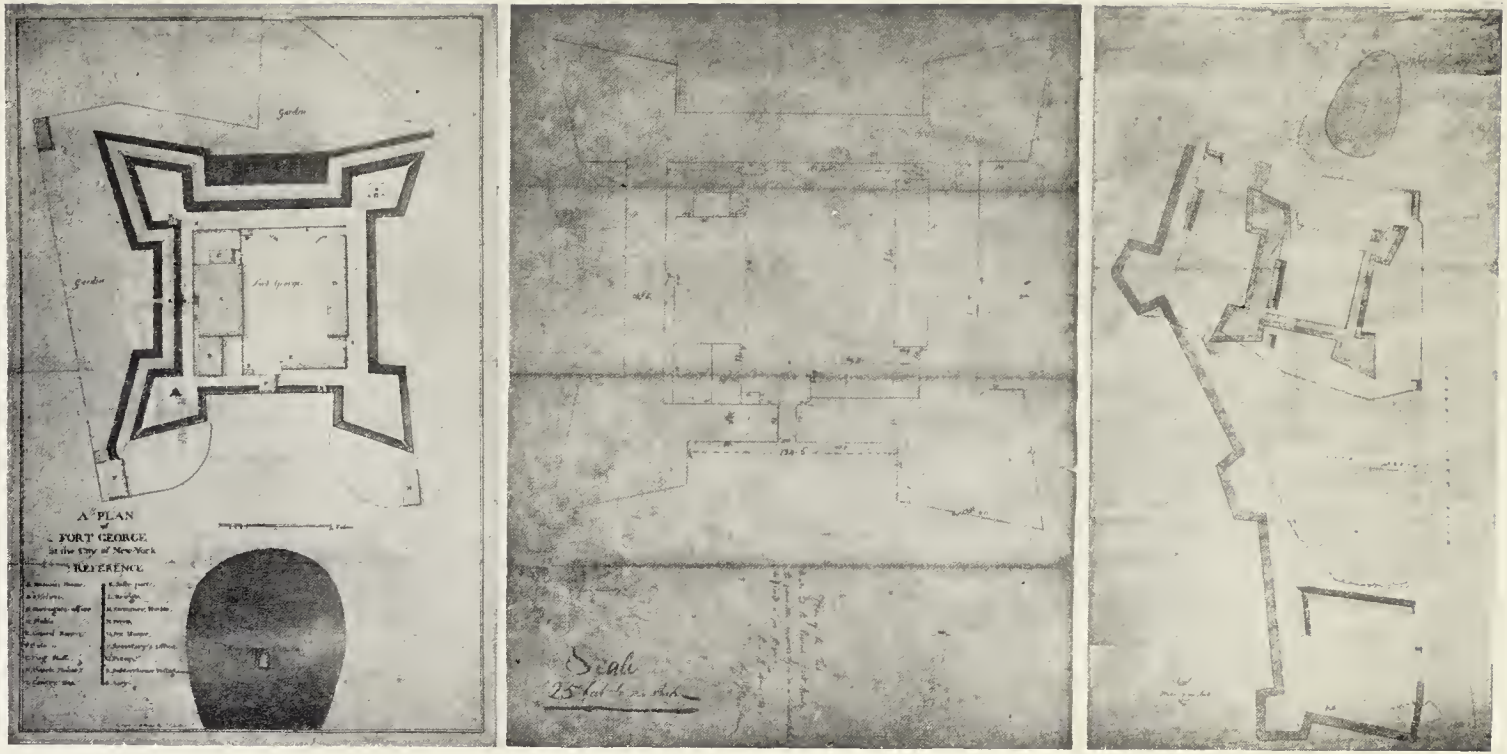
That patience was exhausted on the news of Clinton's departure from Boston, and it seemed that the time had come to defend New York. On Sunday, February 4, therefore, that city suffered again the same embarrassing situation it had faced in the preceding June, and now in far more acute form. For on that day Lee arrived with some 1500 followers from Connecticut—and, simultaneously, Clinton with his fleet and transports reached New York harbor! New Yorkers naturally thought that the end had come; and, with visions of a bombardment and fighting in the streets, thousands of them fled, "as if it were the Last Day."

But as a collision had been avoided by Tryon six months before, so now Clinton saved the situation. He declared that he had only stopped to call on Governor Tryon; expressed regret at the distress his advent had occasioned; and, disappointed that he could not land, he sent for the Mayor to ask him to assure the people of the city that he was only there on a friendly errand and cherished no hostile intentions. His conduct, indeed, amazed Lee beyond measure. "If it is really so," he wrote to Washington, "it is the most whimsical piece of civility I ever heard of! He informs us that his intention is for North Carolina, where he expects five regiments from England; that he only brought two companies of light infantry from Boston. This is certainly a droll way of proceeding; to communicate his full plan to the enemy is too novel to be credited." None the less it seemed to be true. Clinton presently sailed away southward. The city breathed

freely again; the Committee of Safety returned to its labors; and Lee took up his task, undisturbed by the British authorities or ships.

Advised by a Captain Smith, an engineer officer, and assisted—or hindered—by a committee of the Congress, the American commander began the fortification of the town. It was apparent from the first that it was difficult or impossible to defend completely a place surrounded on three sides by deep water against an enemy who controlled the sea. It was determined, therefore, to construct defenses which would serve to hamper the landing of a hostile force, and make its permanent occupation of the town impossible. To this end it was proposed to block the Hell Gate passage by a fort on Hoorn's Hook at the foot of what is now East 89th Street, and at Halleck's Point opposite; to plant batteries at the foot of Catherine Street, on Rutgers' "first hill"; and at Coenties' Slip. These with the "Grand Battery" and Fort George, and corresponding batteries on the Long Island shore, it was decided, would make a long stay of the British fleet in the harbor impossible, and the position of a landing-party untenable.

The key of the situation was "Columbia Heights," a bluff on Long Island, with an entrenched camp for three or four thousand men, and a chain of covering redoubts. On the North River side, the northern wall of Fort George was to be torn down and a traverse built across Bowling Green to sweep the fort in case the enemy effected a landing there. All streets leading to the North River were to be barricaded; redoubts and minor fortifications were to be placed at defensible points as far north as Kingsbridge; the roads "obstructed to artillery"; and forts erected on Jones', Bayard's



A Plan of Fort George of the City of New York and the Bowling Green, About 1773.
From the original wash drawing by Claude Joseph Sauthier in the Library of Congress, Washington.

and Lispenard's hills, to prevent approach from the north. Thus the city, as Lee declared, would be made "an advantageous field of battle"—a conclusion which would doubtless have brought small comfort to its inhabitants had they known of it.

On this extensive plan he set his little force of seventeen hundred men at work. But as the British threat against the Carolinas developed, the Continental Congress gave him command of the newly created Department of the South, and he hastened to his new field of operations, leaving New York to "Lord Stirling's" care. This vigorous officer, now a brigadier-general, himself a New Yorker and fully acquainted with the place, pushed the work forward rapidly with an army soon augmented to four thousand men, among whom were enrolled the local militia. On March 14 he was advised by Washington that the British were about to abandon Boston, and would probably make for New York, which was to be defended at all costs. Stirling appealed to every one for troops; Congress co-operated; the Committee of Safety ordered out the whole male population of the city to work on fortification; and on the day following the evacuation of Boston, seven regiments of continental troops were set in motion for New York. Six more regiments were despatched ten days later. Major-General Putnam was sent to take command; the rest of the army, save five regiments, followed; and on April 13 Washington himself arrived. By the 24th the American troops were encamped in the city; and, six regiments having been sent to guard against the threatened invasion from Canada, the rest of the army was brigaded, assigned quarters, and, in modification of Lee's plan, set to work to draw a line of entrench-

ments across the Brooklyn peninsula on Long Island, between Gowanus and Wallabout bays. By a daring night attack, Putnam seized Governor's Island, and another party occupied Red Hook; so that the *Asia,* with her companion ships, deprived of a convenient watering-place, fell down toward Sandy Hook, leaving the city and the harbor for the first time wholly to the Americans.

Contrary to Washington's prevision, they were undisturbed. Instead of making for New York, Howe went to Halifax, to prepare in that "nook of penury and cold," as Burke described it, for the reconquest of the colonies. Meanwhile Cornwallis, with seven regiments, set sail from England, and, finding Boston lost, joined Howe at Halifax. There the forces being assembled for the recovery of America gathered while the Americans pushed on the fortification of New York, which looked upon itself as doomed. In its long history of almost continuous excavation, not even in the darkest days of subway construction has that city been more disturbed than in this spring and summer of 1776. Upon the works about Brooklyn, on batteries and redoubts, forts and barricades throughout the whole island of Manhattan, Washington's army of twenty thousand men, with all the labor which the American authorities of every kind could hire or compel, worked faithfully in those eventful weeks while Howe's great armament gathered at Halifax.

Those two towns were the busiest places in North America; and New York in particular altered its whole appearance for the worse. Besides the citadel and outworks on Governor's Island—the strongest position about New York—besides the battery at Paulus Hook, and the entrenchments about Brooklyn, the city itself bristled with guns along the

water-front. There was a barrier across Broadway at Bowling Green; a redoubt on North River west of Trinity Church, another called "Bunker Hill" at the present intersection of Grand and Centre Streets, a fort with seven guns on Brooklyn Heights, another with five guns at Red Hook. Fort Washington was built below Kingsbridge, and earthworks, ditches and felled trees were to be found everywhere. Breastworks and barricades, redoubts and forts, sprang up on every hand; the streets were filled with the activities of the "diggers-in"; and, in emulation of the exploits of the men of Marblehead about Boston, a little fleet of vessels, ranging in size from whaleboats to schooners, scoured the surrounding waters to harass communication with the British ships below.

From all this preparation it appeared not only that New York was about to become a theatre of war, but that it would be defended from street to street, from house to house; that its capture or retention would become the test of the success or failure of the revolutionary cause; that at any moment the British Armada would appear, and fire and slaughter would begin at once. It is not surprising that all the remaining population who could get away fled from the doomed town. But March went by, then April, May, and June, and nothing more warlike was to be heard than the incessant, feverish activity of pick and spade. On them, it seemed, the Revolution hung. There was not even time to drill; and this first orgy of digging up the streets was broken only by occasional outbreaks of mob violence, when city patriots, averse to an excess of manual labor, or seeking to lighten the monotony of life, amused themselves with "Tory-riding," as it was called.

In this new out-door sport then growing popular in Ameri-

ca rails and tar-buckets and feather-beds were used extensively —and this practice became so dear to the rougher elements that even the army had trouble to repress it. "Dear Brother," wrote Peter Elting to Captain Richard Varick on June 13, 1776. "We Had some Grand Toory Rides in this City this week & in particular Yesterday. Several of them ware handeld verry Roughly Being Caried trugh the Streets on Rails, there Cloaths Tore from there backs and there Bodies pritty well Mingled with the dust. Amongst them ware C—— Capt. Hardenbrook, Mr. Rapelje, Mr. Queen the Poticary & Lessly the barber. There is hardly a toory face to be seen this morning."

And he adds, with evident regret, tempered by recollection of the wonderful day he had, "Our Congress published a Resolve on the Occasion, Expressing there disaprobation, tho it might have procedid from a Proper Zeal for the liberties of Amarican freedom & desire that it may Cease, & that a mode for punishing such Offenders will soon be adopted for this Colony."

This was not the only trouble which the military authorities experienced with the population of the city, though, for the most part, they had found their chief difficulty with the moderates. The first coming of the troops under Lee had led to a dispute between the provincial and the continental authorities over their respective powers in controlling the military. Lee, alleging that Tryon was inducing gunsmiths to emigrate to England, ordered that all communication with the Governor should be stopped. The Provincial Congress' "committee of war" protested, and communication with the British ships was allowed to go on. It was not, indeed, until the arrival of the rest of the American army, and

Washington's protest, that intercourse with the royal ships was finally cut off. "For," wrote the General, "if we are at peace, why are the ports blockaded, property destroyed, citizens made captive; if we are at war, my imagination is not fertile enough to suggest a reason in support of the intercourse." This was the end. The Council was refused permission to meet with the Governor on board the *Duchess of Gordon* on April 17; the Assembly was dissolved; and New York, with America generally, entered on the final measures which led to independence.

With that circumstance the European world began a period of revolutionary activity which, with slight intermission, lasted for nearly half a century. It is commonly said that the American Revolution was the product of the stubborn resistance of George III and his government to the claims of the colonists; and that is measurably true. It is equally common to say that the French Revolution was the result of similar causes. One may also explain the revolt of the South American colonies on like grounds. Yet it is evident that the two latter were not the result of George III's obstinacy; nor immediately related to each other. There must be, in fact, some more general reason for the Age of Revolution which now began; and there is. That reason lies in the breach between the old order and the new throughout the European world; a breach caused by the altered and altering circumstances of the time, and by the new philosophy of society and politics then making its way throughout that world.

The great herald of revolution was Rousseau, expressing the spirit which underlay these movements, a spirit expressed

in turn by the words "liberty" and "equality." It was revealed in the appeal to "natural" laws and rights against statutes and precedents; the appeal to "reason" against traditional authority. It was presently embodied in the idea of "nations" and of nationality. Against it the forces of existing government naturally set themselves; and the result was the epoch of conflict which now began. Men in Great Britain followed the lead of such writers as Blackstone, who published his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* in the year of the Stamp Act disturbances, 1765. That general defense of the existing system voiced the doctrine upon which the British government acted to the end—the doctrine of the supremacy of Parliament and the mother-country over the colonies, the historical tradition of authority, then generally accepted by all European governments.

When the refusal of the Americans to accept that principle was supported not only by sentiment, but by arms and argument; when men like John Adams formulated a constitutional case against it, and men like Samuel Adams conspired successfully against it, they found supporters in Great Britain itself, like Dean Tucker and Edmund Burke. Burke, indeed, represented the transition from the old to the new. He defended the Americans, he was to attack the French revolutionaries; and his argument was based in each case largely on tradition—in the case of America on charter and prescriptive, or at least permissive, liberties. But at the very moment of the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and America appeared two volumes which might have been the product of the colonists themselves. However little they influenced the Americans, they were obviously influenced by the circumstances of the colonies; and they ex-

pressed, each in its way, that new spirit which was to challenge successfully the old order of affairs. The first was Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations;* the second was Jeremy Bentham's *Fragment on Government.*

In Smith's chapter on Colonies he advances considerations which go far to explain the situation which had arisen in America. "In order," he says, "to put Great Britain upon a footing of equality with her own colonies—which the law has hitherto supposed to be subject and subordinate—it seems necessary, upon the scheme of taxing them by parliamentary requisition that parliament should have some means of rendering its requisitions immediately effectual, in case the colonial assemblies should attempt to evade or reject them." And he adds pointedly, "what those means are, it is not very easy to conceive, and it has not yet been explained."

Moreover, he goes on to say, "Should the Parliament of Great Britain, . . . be ever fully established in the right of taxing the colonies, even independent of the consent of their own assemblies, the importance of those assemblies would from that moment be at an end, and with it, that of all the leading men of British America. Men desire to have some share in the management of public affairs chiefly on account of the importance which it gives them. Upon the power which the greater part of the leading men, the natural aristocracy of every country, have of preserving or defending their respective importance, depends the stability and duration of every system of free government. . . . The leading men of America, like those of all other countries, desire to preserve their own importance. They feel, or imagine, that if their assemblies, which they are fond of calling parliaments, and of considering as equal in authority to the parlia-

ment of Great Britain, should be so far degraded as to become the humble ministers and executive officers of that parliament, the greater part of their importance would be at an end. They have rejected, therefore, the proposal of being taxed by parliamentary requisition, and like other ambitious and high-spirited men, have rather chosen to draw the sword in defence of their own importance."

To reconcile them, the Scotch philosopher urged, therefore, the presence of American representatives in the British Parliament. That proposal the Americans had already rejected. They stood, virtually, on the equality of their assemblies with Parliament; on the right to tax themselves as well as to administer their own affairs in those assemblies; in short on the position of Adam Smith's own Scottish fellow-countrymen before the Act of Union which gave them representatives in the British Parliament.

Had a new Act of Union between the colonies and the mother-country been feasible and acceptable to both sides, the revolution might have been averted. Short of that, by the spring of 1776, nothing but the complete recognition of the American position by Parliament could have accomplished this miracle. "We went to war," remarked Daniel Webster in later years, "on a preamble"; and that preamble to the Declaration of Independence, which was even then being dreamed of, declared among other things that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends"—of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

That was the voice of the eighteenth century; and at the very moment that it was being converted into action it was expressed in another book to which the American Revolution gave especial point, Jeremy Bentham's *Fragment on Government.* Rejecting as absurd the contention so strongly held by the followers of Rousseau and by the colonists as to "natural law" and "natural rights" he based his argument on that favorite eighteenth century doctrine of "happiness," and uttered his famous dictum that society and government ought to be organized "for the greatest good to the greatest number." Sovereignty—that indeterminate authority of government over an indeterminate number of people—he regarded not as absolute but as relative; and in words which expressed the practical aspect of the revolutionary party, at this moment—though each was ignorant of the other's argument—he noted that it tended to cease when men were convinced that its disadvantages outweighed its advantages. At that point, in accord with the doctrine of utility, resistance might begin. Against all tradition he set his face; for government was not intended for anything but to secure the "happiness" of mankind; it was a product of reason, not of sentiment; and when it was outworn, it was time to set something new in its place.

Thus Bentham and Rousseau, starting from different premises and travelling by very different ways, joined company in this, and joined with the more practical activities of the Americans. The old system of colonial government no longer met the test of "reason"; it no longer satisfied those over whom it was exerted. Their "happiness" demanded another system; that system was denied by the home government; and the great principle of the "consent of the gov-

erned," the doctrines of "reason" and of "justice," required a new "social contract." That contract refused, resistance was justifiable.

Thus the great voices of the new order combined; and their first echo was heard in America. The first effort to put in practice these new theories was by men to whom their authors were unknown, but who had reached the point of armed resistance by other roads—by the light of nature, or their own interests. When the conflict came between the "right of sovereignty" of the home government and the "duty of obedience" of the colonies, the whole issue of modern politics was raised, and in the phrase "the consent of the governed" was summed up the whole argument. The "governed" refused to "consent," some violently, some moderately, and thus they found themselves opposed both to the loyal followers of traditional authority and to the vested and historical authority of Parliament and the Crown.

One must expect in all such crises that men will divide in their opinions much as the American colonists divided. If we could eliminate from our political vocabulary the words "right" and "wrong," the task of the historian would be easier; and especially in such a case as arises in revolutionary epochs. Each side to this great controversy had a case; the case of each side was denied by the extremists of the other party; and the activities of those extremists, with the circumstances which they created, led to war. That war was waged on each side in the name of two conflicting principles of government; and in New York as elsewhere in America, and presently in the world at large, they separated men into opposing camps.

It was the peculiar quality of the ablest of the New York-

ers that from the beginning to the end they were moderate men; that they stood for order as for liberty. Nor is it without significance that when the war was done and independence achieved, men like Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams opposed the authority of the United States but little less than they had opposed that of Great Britain; while men like Jay and Hamilton joined with men like Washington and Marshall to create a firm and capable central government. Nor is it less significant that this government was founded on the principles of Bentham rather than on those of Rousseau. It was the purpose of its founders "to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty" for themselves and their posterity. And on the first of the committees which prepared this immortal document was to be found the name of R. R. Livingston; on the final committee the names of Alexander Hamilton and Gouverneur Morris. The last named drew the final draft; and it was largely owing to the arguments of the *Federalist*—written by Hamilton, Jay and Madison—that it was adopted. Thus it may be fairly said that in the whole of this great movement New York took her full share.

CHAPTER VIII

The Loss of New York, 1776*

TO many minds the struggle for independence by the thirteen British colonies in North America seems a comparatively simple, if heroic, episode. Driven to resistance by the oppressive measures of George III's government, they took up arms when all other redress was denied them. Though opposed by powerful British forces, Indian allies, and hired mercenaries, aided by disloyal Tories, they conquered, with some aid from the French; and so vindicated their right to liberty. In that view the whole matter is clear; the picture is done in black and white. All who were not for the patriot cause were against it, and the issues were definite in outline and easy to comprehend.

But it is evident from the history of New York in this period that the question of independence was not the simple matter which it has been often, if not usually, conceived. It was not merely a problem of politics, or of the relations between Great Britain and her rebellious subjects. Men, even the best of men, and in many cases especially the best of men, were often divided in their own minds, as well as against each other. The revolutionary party and the Congress which represented it walked slippery ways, where a mistake not only would have cost them their cause, but might have cost their lives; and they walked softly in consequence.

*For more detailed accounts of the New York campaign see the authorities mentioned in the Preface and below.

Throughout the entire period many of its ablest members sought accommodation and they avoided, wherever they could, antagonizing any element until the final break seemed inevitable. In fact they pushed the idea of ultimate compromise to the verge of absurdity; and New York was hardly behind other colonies in attempting to carry on an illogical effort to make war and peace at the same time. Both continental and provincial congresses were chary of declaring independence; they were still more chary of levying taxes. New Hampshire set up a state government in this spring of 1776 but disavowed the idea of separation from the mother-country; and Maryland armed, but forbade her delegates in Congress to support the idea of independence.

There was another dangerous factor in the situation. Under the combined pressure of the Association and the Revolution, business virtually disappeared. Importation had long since all but ceased; communication between the provinces, especially between New Jersey and New York, was hampered or checked altogether; and the city actually suffered for food during the winter and spring of 1776. The economic fabric threatened to collapse; for, as matters stood, it was as impossible to trade with Great Britain as to open the colonial ports to ships of other nations. It had become increasingly apparent that there were, in fact, but two alternatives: submission, and independence. The one would re-establish trade with the mother-country; the other would begin trade with the rest of the world; and in this spring of 1776 it became virtually inevitable that the colonists would have to choose. Moreover they were confronted in many places by a demand from unenfranchised classes for

the vote; and had thus to consider not merely independence but what was to most of them fully as serious a problem, that of democracy.

Such was the situation of affairs while New York was being fortified; and that situation, so far as New York and, ultimately, the other colonies were concerned, came to a head during these very months. In April 1776 there were held the elections for the third Provincial Congress, which, for the moment, divided interest even with the threat of the approaching war. On April 6th, the non-intercourse policy having proved a failure, and conciliation seeming very distant, the colonial ports were opened to the world. In a sense, the future was determined by that act; for independence was thereby made all but imperative. Its declaration was determined largely by the elections to the Congress; but there remained three great problems confronting its advocates. Should it be declared at once; should it be by provincial or continental congress; and should the new provincial or "state" governments be democratic or, as before, oligarchic? These were the questions at issue; and upon them men divided, as before, into two opposing factions. In New York the continental delegates, the city committee and the conservatives on the one side; the Mechanics' Committee, the "radicals," and the army on the other, embarked with vigor on the great dispute; and argument shared honors with fortification in those eventful days.

In the city the moderates maintained themselves successfully against the efforts of the radicals to replace their members in the Continental Congress with men of more advanced opinions; but the Tories were compelled to give up their arms and swear not to assist the invaders as well as to

sign the Association or go to jail. Some did one, some the other; but whichever way they chose they were eliminated from politics. In the counties there was little interest; the perfected machinery of district and county committees directed the whole affair; the loyalists took little or no part in the proceedings; and the new body was virtually controlled in the moderate-radical interest. The question of the formation of a state government was immediately brought to the fore. Still the Provincial Congress avoided the word "independence." While it recognized the "abdication" of Tryon, the dissolution of the Assembly and the "open and unwarranted hostilities" of the British forces; it adopted a report presented by Scott, Jay and Haring recommending the formation of a new government "to continue in force until a future peace with Great Britain," without more definite commitment to its form, than that it appeared to these cautious men of politics it should be somewhere between monarchy and democracy.

But what the Provincial Congress hesitated to do was meanwhile done for them by an outside power. While they deliberated and the soldiers dug, the Continental Congress voted in May to suppress royal authority throughout the colonies. Early in June a resolution looking toward independence was introduced by the joint action of the Virginia and Massachusetts delegates. On July 2 it was adopted by all the delegates present, save those of New York, who waited instructions from their constituents. On July 4 it was finally voted unanimously, again save for New York. The reasons for that temporary abstinence—for New York was presently to join in the decisive act—lay partly in the conservative attitude of the colony, partly in the peculiar

circumstances of the case—for on the last day of May it was reported that British ships had begun to appear in the lower harbor. The Provincial Congress hastily adjourned to meet at White Plains on July 2; and the instructions which the New York members in the Continental Congress demanded from it were never sent, for obvious reasons.

This did not mean that political activity was at an end in the province. First came "Tryon's plot," in which it was alleged the Governor attempted to conspire with the mayor of New York and even some of Washington's bodyguard to blow up the American magazines and seize the general and his staff; then during June another election was held. There was a repetition of the previous radical activity; and on July 9, 1776, there came the action which finally determined the fate of the colony and the city in the Revolution. On that day there met at the court-house at White Plains the members of the fourth Provincial Congress, elected in June, who declared that New York had begun to exist as a "state" on April 20, 1775—the day after the battle of Lexington. That body requested the officers of justice to carry on all business in the name of the "state," since King and Parliament were no longer recognized. Having done this, they "hastily adjourned," after listening to the reading of the Declaration of Independence; approving it, ordering that it be published "with beat of drum," and authorizing the New York delegates in the Continental Congress to act for them.

At almost the same moment the various brigades of the American army in New York were drawn up on their respective parade-grounds to listen to the Declaration. In the evening, to confirm their independence, the city crowd pulled

By courtesy of the New York Public Library.

THE BRITISH FLEET AT ANCHOR IN THE NARROWS BETWEEN LONG ISLAND AND STATEN ISLAND, ON JULY 12, 1776.
From the original water-color sketch by Archibald Robertson of the British Engineers.

down the gilded leaden statue of George III in Bowling Green: whose fragments, in due course of time, were sent to Litchfield, Connecticut, and there, we are informed, were cast by its patriotic daughters into precisely 42,088 cartridges for the American army. The head of the rider, after long concealment in New York, found its way to London. The tail of the horse reposes again in New York. There also, after doing duty first as a tombstone for a British officer, then as a patriot's doorstep, is the slab on which the statue stood; and these, preserved by the New York Historical Society, remain among the curious results of the Declaration of Independence in the annals of the city.

Apart from the naturally conservative character of New York, there were other reasons near at hand in those eventful days of early July 1776, which made her citizens hesitate to take the final step and contributed to the hasty exodus of the Provincial Congress. They were strong and convincing arguments of weight and potency, brought to bear with a peculiar emphasis, reasons with which neither Virginia nor Massachusetts had at that time to reckon. In the very days that Congress took the irrevocable step, there appeared before New York the most formidable force yet used by any European power outside of Europe, the British expedition now at last come down from Halifax. On June 19 the first sails of this great armada appeared off Sandy Hook. On July 2 they were in the harbor; and even while the Declaration of Independence was being adopted, the army which was designed to make independence impossible was being disembarked on Staten Island, and its commander, Sir William Howe, with his brother Richard, the Admiral, concerted measures with the dispossessed royal governor to re-

store British authority in New York and thence throughout America.

It was enough to give the hardiest patriot pause. A hundred and thirty vessels, carrying six thousand veterans from Halifax; troops from the British garrisons in the West Indies, Gibraltar and the British Isles, and eight thousand seasoned soldiers from Germany, well-officered and well-supplied, experienced in war, supported by a fleet—such was the great argument presented by the British government against a hasty decision by New York in favor of independence. Nor was this all; for Carleton meanwhile had come down from Canada in the wake of the retreating Americans who had failed in their object of detaching that province from British rule. At that instant he was preparing transports to carry his army of some thirteen thousand men across Lake Champlain to attack Crown Point to whose defense Washington had already despatched reinforcements. Beside these still, within another month Clinton brought back from Carolina the regiments which the stubborn defense of Fort Sullivan in Charleston harbor had made it impossible to land. In all some thirty thousand men stood presently ready to attack New York.

For more than a month, however, the British did not move. It is easy to blame Howe for unwarranted delay, and his later career bears out the promise of its beginning; for over it, as over the whole of the English effort to conciliate or conquer the rebellious colonies, may be placed one epitaph, "Too late." But in this case reproach is hardly justified. It must be remembered that the British government was loath to fight; and Howe, like many of his officers, had opposed the war. Moreover he and his brother, the Ad-

miral, were empowered to negotiate; and they made every effort to exercise their powers as peace-commissioners. Those efforts failed; and, finding that the only course left open to them was resort to force, fully acquainted with the political and military situation of his antagonists, Howe finally began to move. On August 28 he landed fifteen thousand men at Gravesend Bay, where, covered by the fleet, he made his dispositions, undisturbed by the Americans. With that movement the struggle for the possession of New York began.

That struggle was, perhaps, not so unequal as it seemed. From an American standpoint an attack upon New York, while it might ultimately succeed, would have appeared a difficult and costly operation for their enemies. The place was heavily, if hastily, fortified. It was defended by more than twenty thousand men, who, though undisciplined, were not unaccustomed to the use of arms, and who had had some experience in war. They were, moreover, flushed with victory; for up to this time, with the exception of the Canadian expedition, the Americans had been peculiarly fortunate in their military enterprises. They had repulsed the British raid on Concord and Lexington, and compelled the British to evacuate Boston. They had suppressed the rising of the Carolina loyalists, and prevented the landing of Clinton's force at Charleston, by their daring and stubborn defense of its fort under Moultrie. Though Montgomery and Arnold had failed before Quebec, they had only withdrawn before superior numbers and the colonists still held the fortresses which barred the way to Carleton's army.

Moreover the American army in New York was not ill supplied with arms and ammunition, thanks to their seizure

of the British equipment, and the stores which their vessels had brought from abroad in the preceding months. The defenses of New York bristled, it was said, with more than two hundred pieces of artillery. Not only were there in the town supplies for five thousand men for three months, but the country behind them was rich and easily accessible. They seemed, then, in a fair way to be able to hold out for a considerable period; especially since Howe's campaign began so late. They had not, indeed, met the British army in open battle, and they knew neither its strength nor their own weakness in the field; nor did they plan such an engagement. If, within their entrenchments, they could keep Howe off until winter, his situation might well become precarious; and by the following spring the British government, finding the subjugation of the colonies difficult or impossible, might well assent to terms. Even though the British forces were numerous and well equipped; though they were led by able and experienced officers; held the sea, and commanded the aid and sympathy of the loyalists who had flocked to the British camp; many of the American commanders believed that it might still be possible to repeat the successes of their army in the preceding spring about Boston. That belief was not wholly shared by their general nor by all of his officers. "The noisy Sons of Liberty," wrote Reed, "are quietest in the field"; and Washington did his best to instil such commonplaces of discipline as that sentries should not sit down nor lay aside their muskets when on duty. The troops were raw levies; their artillery was bad, their cavalary worse; the staff worst of all; and there were practically no engineers. Of 27,000 men but 19,000 were fit for duty and of those 2,000 had no arms. The harvest was

good and many went home to gather it. The forts were reported to be "death traps." Altogether it was no cheerful prospect; but the political situation was such that it seemed unwise to Congress to abandon New York without a blow, and the American commander did what he could to carry out the plan.

The test soon came; and the first episode took place in Brooklyn. By the nature of the defense agreed upon, Washington's army was divided into two parts. The larger body held the city and Manhattan Island; the smaller occupied the lines about Brooklyn; while a reserve was stationed on the New Jersey shore, and a garrison held Governors Island. The Americans about Brooklyn, it has been estimated, were outnumbered somewhere between two to one and ten to one. Perhaps exclusive of the militia, whose numbers are indeterminate and whose value in the actual fighting is still more dubious, three to one is not far wrong. On the other hand they were supported by entrenchments, and, with good leadership, they might be a formidable obstacle to British occupation of the city.

To meet the British threat they covered roughly the approaches to Brooklyn on the east and northeast. On the right, where Greenwood Cemetery is now, lay Stirling and Parsons, with six regiments, opposed by Grant with two British brigades. In the centre the Americans were under Sullivan, who had been replaced as the commander of the Brooklyn defense by Putnam; opposed by de Heister's Hessians operating from Flatbush. The American left—if it could be so called, for it was wholly "in the air"—consisted of three little regiments under Miles. Beyond it lay the old Jamaica Road, unguarded save by a little patrol of five

mounted officers at Half-Way House, whose duty it was to give the alarm in case the British penetrated to that point.

Nothing better illustrates the character and result of this battle than this unfortunate circumstance on which the whole thing turned. Given such a situation, Howe's problem was simplicity itself, and he solved it easily. On the night of August 26, when Washington himself had crossed over to New York, the British began their movement. Grant and de Heister threatened an attack, and held Stirling, Parsons and Sullivan fast in their positions. Clinton, Cornwallis and Percy set out long before daylight across the fields for the Jamaica Road; picked up the patrol there; marched unopposed past Miles, who was not strong enough to risk an engagement, and took the Americans in the flank and rear. By ten o'clock the action was complete; the revolutionary army was driven into the Brooklyn lines, and only Stirling's heroic stand with a handful of his men prevented complete disaster. When Washington arrived at two o'clock in the afternoon, he found his army defeated, a fifth of its strength prisoners, and the rest cooped up in the Brooklyn entrenchments; Stirling and Sullivan in British hands; and the whole force demoralized. How astonishing the victory was, and how easy, may be judged from the reports of the casualties. The American army lost about a thousand men, three-fourths of whom were prisoners. The British forces reported five officers and fifty-six men killed, twelve officers and 245 men wounded, one officer and twenty marines prisoners; the Hessians, two men killed, three officers and twenty-three men wounded.*

Washington's first care was to prevent complete collapse

*For a more detailed account see H. B. Dawson, *Battle of Long Island,* and H. P. Johnston, *Campaign of 1776 around New York and Brooklyn.*

and capture of his army; and he summoned reinforcements and made dispositions to oppose the further advance of the enemy. They, on their part, showed no inclination to follow up their success, and Howe has been bitterly condemned for his inaction. It is quite possible that had he pushed his attack home he might have crushed the American army opposed to him out of existence. But the weather was bad; the Americans were heavily entrenched; the British seemed to have Washington's army within their grasp; and Howe followed the dictates of prudence rather than those of vigor. On his part Washington, having viewed the situation, perceived that as matters stood it was all but desperate. His men were tired and discouraged; supplies were scanty; the weather was atrocious; and it seemed evident that as soon as it stopped raining the victorious British who were investing the American lines after the most approved and leisurely fashion of European warfare would carry the line of entrenchments and destroy or capture his whole force. On the 29th, therefore, an American council of war determined on retreat. "Every kind of water-craft from Hell Gate to Spuyten Duyvil that could be kept afloat" was pressed into service. The troops were told that they were to be relieved by fresh New Jersey regiments; and, under cover of night and early morning fog, the whole force was withdrawn, with the loss of but four prisoners—an exploit which was in some respects one of the most brilliant military operations of the war.

Such was the battle of Long Island and the evacuation of the Brooklyn lines which formed the first episode of the struggle for New York. Its immediate effect was all but disastrous. The Provincial Congress took refuge in Harlem.

Washington withdrew the garrison from Governors Island, and notified Congress that as a result of the engagement the troops had lost confidence in their officers, the militia was going home, and that it was a question whether New York should not only be abandoned but destroyed.

At the same time, General Howe, having received his prisoner Sullivan with great courtesy, and agreed to his exchange for Prescott, and the exchange of Stirling for the royal governor of New Jersey, interned some months before in Connecticut, Sullivan undertook a mission to the Continental Congress in behalf of peace. At almost the same moment that the last of the American troops were being removed from Long Island, Sullivan set out for Philadelphia to lay Howe's invitation for a conference before Congress, "a decoy-duck," as John Adams called him.

Thus confronted simultaneously by Washington's report and Howe's proposal for a conference, the members of Congress addressed themselves to the serious situation of affairs, with what might, in one view, be called undaunted courage, and, in another, ignorant folly. The city, they determined, should in no event be damaged, for if it was lost it would, without doubt, be soon regained. To its defense they ordered up troops from Virginia, North Carolina and Rhode Island, and urged the provincial conventions and assemblies to hurry forward all possible aid. To Howe's request for a conference they finally agreed, after an acrimonious debate; and Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge were chosen by ballot to meet with Howe—partly, it appeared, as a means of delay until fresh forces could arrive, partly as a means of "quieting the people."

On the 7th of September, therefore, the embassy set out.

On that very day Washington, perceiving that it was impossible to hold New York against the British, who meanwhile were extending their lines along the Long Island waterfront, and bringing up transports and frigates, preparing to cross the East River, began a series of conferences with his general officers to persuade them—for he had no power to compel them—to abandon the city. The majority of his council determined on a middle course, planning to hold the place with five thousand men and to withdraw the rest to the Harlem lines, between Kingsbridge and Harlem Heights. Meanwhile the transfer of stores and sick began; and Washington appealed to Congress in a letter which, more, perhaps, than any single document of the war, laid down the lines of the proper course for the American army to pursue.

"To be prepared at each point of attack," he wrote, "has occasioned an expense of labor which now seems useless, and is regretted by those who form a judgment from after knowledge; but men of discernment will see that by such works and preparations we have delayed the operations of the campaign till it is too late to effect any capital incursion into the country. Every measure is to be formed with some apprehension that all our troops will not do their duty. On our side the war should be defensive; it has been called a war of posts; we should on all occasions avoid a general action, and never be drawn into a necessity to put anything to risk. Persuaded that it would be presumptuous to draw out our young troops into open ground against their superiors both in number and discipline, I have never spared the spade and pickaxe. I have not found that readiness to defend even strong posts at all hazards which is

necessary to derive the greatest benefit from them. We are now in a post acknowledged by every man of judgment to be untenable. A retreating army is encircled with difficulties; declining an engagement subjects a general to reproach, and may throw discouragement over the minds of many; but, when the fate of America may be at stake on the issue, we should protract the war, if possible. The enemy mean to winter in New York; that they can drive us out is equally clear; nothing seems to remain but to determine the time of their taking possession."

At almost the same moment that he was penning these wise and well-informed words, which had but little effect on those to whom they were addressed, a scene was being enacted which, with all of its serious significance, lent a touch of humor to the critical situation of affairs. While the Americans were making every effort to extricate as much of their army and stores as possible from the untenable position which they occupied, and while the British pushed forward their preparations to take possession of the city, the Congressional commissioners were being received and entertained by Admiral Howe at his headquarters on Staten Island, the Billopp house, now called the Conference-House, at Tottenville. After an appropriate "collation," the whole question of accommodation was discussed at length. On his part the British admiral was not, of course, authorized to grant the independence which the Americans demanded, and expressed his regret at their "precipitancy," which was painful to him and perilous to themselves. To this Franklin responded dryly that "the people of America would endeavor to take care of themselves and alleviate as much as possible the pain his lordship might suffer in consequence of any

severe measures he might feel it his duty to adopt." The interview thus unsatisfactorily concluded, Howe accompanied his guests to their boat, expressing his regret that he was unable to regard them as public characters. To which the dour John Adams replied that his lordship might consider him in any light he pleased, "and indeed, I should be willing to consider myself in any character which would be agreeable to your lordship, except that of a British subject." To which Howe observed that "Mr. Adams appears to be a very decided character"; and with this exchange of courtesies ended the fruitless if entertaining interview.

Diplomacy having done its worst, the armies took up the argument. By September 12 Washington had convinced his officers that retirement was inevitable; the stores that could be moved were taken up the river by boat; and it was determined to evacuate the city. Before that could be done, however, the British began to act, and the second episode of the struggle for New York came to a head. Having occupied Brooklyn and Flushing, Ward's and Randall's Islands, set up a battery at Astoria, over against the American battery below Hell Gate, and collected their transports, on the 14th of September the remaining vessels designed to protect the crossing took their stations opposite Kip's Bay, where now the ferry-slips at the foot of East 34th Street indicate the excellent choice of the British commanders for a convenient landing-place. On Sunday morning, the 15th—the third of the notable Sundays of this eventful period—under cover of a vigorous bombardment of the American entrenchments, the transports came across. Four "columns" of barges, heavily laden with troops, whose red uniforms, in the poetic language of an American observer, made them

look "like a clover-field in full bloom," approached nearly if not quite unopposed. The untrained American militia, overwhelmed by the fire from the frigates, to which they were as little accustomed as they were capable of answering, seem scarcely to have replied at all; nor does it appear that the British lost a boat, hardly a man, in the crossing. The defenders did what might have been foreseen—they ran away, and involved in their precipitate flight the troops sent to support them in a last desperate endeavor to oppose the coming of the enemy.

Clinton and Cornwallis with their British and Hessians landed almost unhindered and took 300 prisoners. When Washington arrived from Harlem he found the day was lost. He and his officers, despite what is described as the "terrific" heat, did what men could to avert more serious disaster. Parsons and Fellows, who had been ordered up to support the militia, were carried away by the general panic. Silliman and Knox, who were still in the city, seemed destined to capture; but Putnam's aide, a certain Aaron Burr, persuaded them that he could guide them to safety, and made good his promise; so that after a long and hurried march, chiefly along the Bloomingdale Road, and but one brief collision with the enemy, their commands found refuge in Harlem. Scattered detachments evaded or fought their way to safety. Scott and Wadsworth had already gone; and by noon New York was in British hands. Howe and his staff, with Governor Tryon, took lunch with Mrs. Murray, giving rise to an agreeable legend with more truth, perhaps, than most—however little that may be—that to her well-calculated hospitality the escape of the American army was chiefly due. The British flag was hoisted

over Fort George; the British advance-guards took up their posts over against the American lines, which ran in a rough semicircle of high ground between the Kingsbridge Road and the Hudson, from about what is now 130th to 135th streets; and the army disposed itself throughout the town. Again the losses were insignificant—the Americans some fifteen killed, the Hessians two; and at such slight cost was New York City won.

With this the second act was done; the city lost; all its redoubts, entrenchments, batteries, its barricades, its guns, were rendered useless in one morning's work; its army of defenders driven out; the labors of four months of feverish activity wasted by the new reverse. There was no bombardment, save of the American battery; no fighting in the streets; no bitter defense from house to house. With scarcely a pretense of opposition, this "advantageous field of battle," as Lee had described it, came into British hands. Washington's opinion had been vindicated against the judgment of the warlike but unmilitary members of Congress. It remained to see whether his prophecy that the British would winter in New York would come to pass, or whether the Congressional optimists who had hurried up troops to support an impossible plan of defense, and who believed the British would be unable to hold the place, would be justified. It was all very well for civilian critics and amateur strategists to write of the "cowardly and disgraceful flight" of the American troops. Their flight was inevitable, as good soldiers had seen from the beginning; and political generals and what seemed political exigencies had done what they could to make the American cause hopeless. It was something to have saved an army at all from their incapacity.

But this was not the end of fighting in New York; for with the retreat to Harlem the campaign entered on its third stage. Washington was naturally anxious. His troops had now been twice defeated in two weeks; they had lost most of their artillery, and much of their confidence in themselves and in their officers. He was desirous of avoiding a general engagement, in accordance with the situation of affairs and of his opinion expressed earlier to Congress. None the less, on the day following the retreat, a collision occurred, and what is now a part of Barnard College grounds was added to the "battle-fields of the American Revolution." That engagement, known in American history as the Battle of Harlem Heights—if a skirmish can be dignified with the term battle—was the result of his attempt to feel out the British position. Knowlton was despatched with 120 men to reconnoiter. Advancing along what is now the Boulevard to Bloomingdale Heights he met the British pickets at what is now 126th Street and was checked. A little British force of some three hundred men advanced in turn, and Washington determined to cut them off. He made up a detachment to steal around them while they were engaged with Knowlton, but the precipitate action of the volunteers defeated this purpose. The British withdrew; both sides were reinforced; and a sharp action took place about noon which lasted until the British prepared to attack in force, when Washington withdrew his men, content with the demonstration that his men would fight. What was more important was that in this engagement the Americans lost but sixty killed and wounded against the British seventy killed and 200 wounded, besides the casualties among the Hessians—far more than the cost of taking the city, and the greatest British casualty list since Bunker Hill.

By courtesy of the New York Public Library

A View Across the Upper Harlem Valley, Looking North, in 1776.
From the original water-color sketch by Archibald Robertson of the British Engineers.

For three weeks the two armies lay inactive. The Provincial Congress moved from Harlem to Kingsbridge. The British commanders devoted their attention to securing their new prize; the Americans bent every effort to strengthening their position in Harlem. Meanwhile two circumstances lent a peculiar interest to this breathing-space. The first was the capture, trial and execution of Captain Nathan Hale, who had been sent by Washington to spy out the British plans and strength. He was picked up by the outposts as he attempted to make his way across the lines; was tried before a court martial at Howe's headquarters in the Beekman house, which stood at what is now 51st Street, not far from what is now First Avenue. He was condemned and executed in front of "Artillery Park" near the Dove Tavern, at about what is now the corner of 66th Street and Third Avenue. On the day of Hale's execution, or the night before, a fire broke out in Whitehall Street, set, so the British believed, by the sympathizers with the American cause and "resulting in some hangings" in consequence. It seems to have begun in a public house near Whitehall Slip, burned the east side of Broadway as far as Exchange Place and on the west side as far as Barclay Street. Aided by high winds, it destroyed between four and five hundred buildings, including Trinity Church and the Lutheran Church before it could be checked; thus hampering the movements of the invaders, and lessening the comfort and accommodation of their troops.

These, meanwhile, having thrown up entrenchments in front of their main camps at Bloomingdale and McGowan's Pass, began the fourth stage of the campaign. By October 9 they had begun to move. Two frigates, the *Phœnix* and the *Rose,* had been sent up the Hudson to cut off supplies

from the Americans, and had broken through the obstructions placed to prevent their passage. These preliminaries completed, the movement of the troops began. Leaving Percy with three brigades to hold the city, on October 12 Howe's main army, protected by the fleet, was transferred to Throgs Neck; whence they threatened the rear of the American position. Thus menaced, Washington was compelled to abandon his carefully prepared camp in Harlem, retaining only Fort Washington, and take up new lines along the Bronx River, near what is now Bronx Park. Again Howe moved, this time to New Rochelle (October 18); and again Washington was compelled to make new dispositions, this time about White Plains, accompanied, as usual, by the Provincial Congress. There, in the region now occupied by suburban residences, golf-courses, reservoirs and girls' schools, took place the last manœuvres which separated the American army from New York and gave the city finally into British hands.

Advancing from New Rochelle by way of Scarsdale, Howe came in touch with Washington about White Plains on October 28. Putnam had sent MacDougall's regiment to seize an eminence known as Chatterton's Hill to protect the American left. The British attacked, and though repulsed on the front, drove off the militia on the flank and compelled MacDougall's retirement. This brief but bloody engagement, known as the Battle of White Plains, forced Washington to withdraw to Northcastle, where he took up an all but impregnable position; while Howe, after a delay caused by the weather, turned to other plans. On November 5 he advanced to Dobbs' Ferry; Knyphausen with his Hessians occupied Kingsbridge, where they were joined a

week later by the British; and an attack was there prepared against the last American position covering New York, Fort Washington.

In itself the place was strong, a large five-sided work, set on a hill on the upper end of Manhattan, at about what is now 183rd Street, and defended on the north by Fort Independence on the other side of Spuyten Duyvil Creek, on the south by three lines of entrenchments between what is now 146th and 162nd Streets, and elsewhere by scattered batteries and redoubts. It contained a garrison of nearly three thousand men; but it was cut off from any possible support by the main army; and Washington doubted whether any attempt to hold it should be made. His judgment, though overruled by his staff, was more than justified. On November 15, Howe, having made his dispositions, summoned the garrison to surrender. That denied, on the day following, Percy attacked the entrenchments from the south; Cornwallis the redoubts on the east; and from the north the main attack was pressed home by the Hessians under Rall and Knyphausen. The result was never in doubt; and Washington and his staff, come over from the New Jersey side to view the final preparations, escaped just in time. The Hessians, fighting furiously, broke through; and the American commander, Magaw, surrendered on summons. His garrison of 2850 men was disarmed and marched into the city. Fort Lee was evacuated by the Americans, and with this crowning disaster, the greatest reverse suffered by the Americans in the whole course of the war, the final stage of the campaign for the possession of New York came to an end. Nor was it the only reverse to the American arms, for even as this campaign went on,

and before Fort Washington fell, Arnold, defeated in two naval engagements on Lake Champlain by Carleton's forces, had been compelled to retreat and Crown Point came into British hands.

Howe's army occupied the city. Washington, leaving some troops for observation on the north and east, took his shattered army across New Jersey to a post behind the Delaware followed by the British under Cornwallis. The Provincial Congress continued its journeys, first to Phillipse Manor, then to Poughkeepsie, to Fishkill, and finally to Kingston. The Continental Congress, fearful that Washington would be unable to protect Philadelphia, fled to Baltimore. The victorious British and Hessians were despatched to occupy the New Jersey towns, cover New York from that side, and go into winter quarters there in anticipation of a spring campaign to crush the remnant of resistance.

Thus ended the struggle for the possession of New York; in which, it must be allowed, the honors rested with the British generals. In three months they had defeated their antagonists in a general engagement, manœuvred them out of their carefully prepared positions, and taken more than four thousand prisoners, besides inflicting losses of some six hundred killed and many more wounded, together with nearly all of the artillery that the Americans possessed; and occupied the city which was the prize of victory. On their part, they had suffered perhaps a thousand casualties, and the loss of neither prisoners, artillery nor supplies of any consequence.

It has been the practice of a certain school of historians to try to break the force of these unquestioned facts. They have depreciated the British success and exalted the resistance of

the Americans; exaggerated Howe's strength and minimized that of Washington; dwelt heavily on the mistakes of the British commanders, and glozed over Sullivan's incapacity and the folly of Congress. They have elevated, with pardonable pride, the skirmish of Harlem into an American victory, in endeavoring to counterbalance the defeat of Long Island and the flight of Kip's Bay. But in their natural desire to make a case, they have not only distorted the perspective of history; they have taken the wrong course to discover the true strength of the American cause and its defenders. It is better to face the facts.

The effort to hold New York was one of those not infrequent instances in history where real or supposed political exigency overrides sound strategy, and politicians doom an army and its commanders to almost certain failure. New York could not be held without a fleet; and its loss cost the Americans not only the city itself, but a great part of their already too slender means for continuing the conflict; it nearly cost them all. That it was an error from even a political much less a military standpoint, was evident from the fact that its loss had no appreciable effect on the final success of the American cause. The real strength of that cause, and the real greatness of its leader, were not evidenced in this episode; but in the fact that, in spite of this reverse, Washington and his army retained their fighting qualities. It was not in the defense of New York, which was forced upon them, but in the operations following its loss, when Washington was able to put his own strategy into effect, that the war took on another aspect. That period, rather than the operations in the fall of 1776, is the heroic epoch of the Revolutionary struggle.

CHAPTER IX

The British Occupation, 1776–1778

WITH the fall of Fort Washington and the retirement of the American army behind the Delaware River, New York came finally and unquestionably into British hands. For seven years it remained the centre of their operations to subdue the revolutionary party in the colonies; and during most of that time it was the headquarters of their commanders. Centrally located, convenient for the fleet, easily defensible to a force which held the sea, it was peculiarly suitable for their purposes. A year before their advent it had been an almost ideal place of residence. Its large and pleasant houses, its well-shaded streets, its parks and gardens, its public buildings, its churches and its schools, its warehouses and stores, its newly-founded college, and the delightful country-places which surrounded it on nearly every side might well have induced the gentlemen who commanded His Majesty's forces in America to choose it as their residence while they were engaged in what most of them considered their unpleasant duty of suppressing rebellion in the colonies.

But in a year it had greatly changed. American occupation had made it an armed camp. The preparations for defense had ruined its shade trees and the streets they shaded; the summer-places about the city, the gardens and the groves. Like that Warren estate which Oliver De Lancey

had "nursed for forty years," only to see it wrecked in one brief summer, they had fallen victims to the exigencies of fortification. The public buildings had been turned to military use. King's College had been transformed into a barracks and hospital; the Fields into a parade-ground; and beyond them had been erected rough quarters for the troops. The houses of the fleeing loyalists had been commandeered for the use of the American officers and soldiers; and of the twenty thousand or more inhabitants at the beginning of the war, it was reckoned that half or two-thirds had left. The commerce on which a great part of the population relied for its existence was for the moment at an end; the great warehouses deserted; and the wharves empty save for ships of war, supply, and transports. Though the town had escaped the fate prepared for it by Lee, though it had been neither bombarded nor sacked, and its streets had not been the scene of serious hostilities, it suffered more from the war than any city in America, then or thereafter. The fire which accompanied the British occupation had destroyed, it was declared, a sixth of its houses, and when, the following year, another conflagration swept the place, and it was found impossible amid the stress of war to reconstruct the burned buildings, the city became a sorry spectacle.

Yet New York's sufferings were due but indirectly to the British troops. These, as it were, inherited the work of the Americans and the disasters of the fires; and their first business when the city came into their hands was to adapt the remaining buildings, including the quarters erected by Washington's men, to their own uses. Their earliest and most pressing concern was with their prisoners, and they were hard put to it to find accommodations for such numbers as

they held. In one respect, however, they were fortunate. Only a year before, the city authorities had begun to build a new jail, the so-called Bridewell, on the Common; and this, the last public building erected under the Crown, was now available for the better class of prisoners. The "New Gaol," built in 1759, was put in charge of Provost Cunningham, like all such officers in all wars a man of ill repute, and was thenceforth known commonly as the Provost. Besides this, the Debtors' Prison, the North Dutch Church, the French Church, that part of the old City Hall which had previously been used as a jail, and similar commodious buildings, were pressed into service. But these were not enough, and some of the hulks in the harbor, notably that of the *Jersey,* were turned into prison-ships.

For their own use, the barracks built by the Americans were available, and to these were added still others, more commodious, along the Bowery, leading toward and supporting their main line of defenses on the north. King's College was continued as a barracks and a hospital; and the houses of some of the revolutionary leaders, together with those of some better affected to the royal cause, were used for the officers. The Kennedy House, No. 1 Broadway, became the headquarters of the commandant, first General Robertson, then the genial and popular Colonel Pattison. The Beekman house shared with the Apthorpe house the honor of sheltering the successive commanding generals, Howe, Clinton and Carleton. The main guard house was City Hall on Wall Street. Guard-mounting was held daily on the Mall by Trinity Church, and soon became the centre of attraction for the curiosity and fashion of the town. The inns were mainly occupied by the lesser officers, and many

By courtesy of the New York Public Library.

The Ruins of Trinity Church After the Great Fire of September 21, 1776.

From an original water-color sketch supposed to have been made by Lord Rawdon of Lord Cornwallis's staff.

private houses, conducted by thrifty landladies, offered shelter and entertainment to them as well.

But it would seem that there was never any considerable force kept in the city proper after the first occupation of the town. A brigade of foot, consisting of four regiments, a squadron of dragoons, and three regiments of Hessians, a few thousand men in all, made up the forces which held New York City. At Harlem were three regiments of British and one of Hessians; and there was a small contingent stationed on Governors Island.*

Staten Island, on the other hand, was fortified with redoubts covering the chief British camp, which was used largely as a receiving and concentration point and a centre of operations, and there, even now, at Fort Hill, the industry of the modern antiquarian is rewarded with the discovery of innumerable relics of the long and extensive British occupation. In consequence while the city itself was seldom if ever threatened with serious hostilities, Staten Island became the scene of incessant minor attacks and counter-attacks throughout the whole of the ensuing period.

None the less in this winter of 1776–7 New York took on the character which it was to retain for seven years, that of a garrison town, with all that this implies. Save for the ten months consumed in the capture and occupation of Philadelphia in 1777–8, it remained the centre of British influence in the colonies. Yet aside from that, it played no part in the great conflict which went on in other fields. It was virtually surrounded by American forces in greater or less strength

*The report of an American spy Feb. 15, 1777, lists 2500 Hessians in the "City and Bowry"; 800 troops at Harlem; and at or about Fort Washington about 1500 more, chiefly Hessians under Knyphausen. *Comm. for Detecting Conspiracies*, p. 121.

and virtually cut off from the outside, save by sea. But however harassed, it was not seriously attacked; and its life went on in comparative peace under the British flag.

But what of the New Yorkers themselves in this stirring period; what of those little-regarded citizens, whose comforts and concerns were so greatly interfered with by the activities of war and so little taken into consideration by the rival forces as the city became the prize of contending armies? What of De Lanceys and Livingstons, of Watts and Scotts, of Rhinelanders and Rennsselaers? What of royal officials and assemblymen, of mayor and council, of Provincial Congress and Committee of One Hundred, of Sons of Liberty and of loyalists? For in their acts and fortunes lies the true history of New York, and, in a sense, the clue to the whole history of the time.

The answer is peculiarly complex and various; for seldom, if ever, in so brief a period has any city in America endured such sudden and violent fluctuations in its status and its population, or more clearly typified a national movement, as New York in the first twelvemonth of the American Revolution. From those hectic October days of 1775, when so many of its inhabitants followed the example of the royal governor and fled before the threats of riots and bombardment, to September 1776, when he returned with the victorious British troops, there was not merely an ebb and flow of population, there was from time to time a sudden torrent of exodus and influx, reflecting the quick shifts in the fortunes of war, and disrupting to an extraordinary degree the usual routine of life.

At first it was all patriot; for during the winter and spring of 1776, the loyalists or Tories were forcibly repressed by

their more radical fellow-citizens, who from attacks in pamphlet, newspaper, caricature and speeches had proceeded to rabbling and plundering their antagonists. The loyalist leaders were clapped into jail, and many of them, on Washington's arrival, were sent to New Hampshire or Connecticut, for safe-keeping. Then came the first great emigration of the loyalists, for many fled from persecutions which the American commander was unable to suppress. As soon as Howe established his camp on Staten Island, hundreds flocked within his lines, where they were joined by many fellow-sufferers from the other colonies. Many enrolled in those bodies of auxiliary troops which offered their services to the British authorities, conspicuous among them, De Lancey's brigade, Turnbull's Third American Regiment, Simcoe's Queen's Rangers, and the command which that sturdy Staten Island Tory, Colonel Billopp, raised. Yet they were never very numerous, a few thousand men at most, the rest content to let the apparently overwhelming British army do the fighting for them.

Not a few of these refugees took part, as soldiers or guides, in the campaign for the possession of New York; and to some of them who directed the march of the British which determined the Battle of Long Island was due in no small measure that great catastrophe to the American arms. These "Tories" naturally incurred the bitter hatred of the revolutionary party while they were alive, and the vilification of patriot historians when they were dead, as traitors to their country. Yet in that very phrase resides the explanation, if not the excuse, of that numerous body of New Yorkers, and of colonials generally, who led the emigration to Howe's camp, and enrolled in his forces. It was *their* country, no

less than that of their opponents; they wished to keep it what it was; and they conceived they had at least as great a right to take up arms to maintain the government as their antagonists had to take arms against it.

One need not hold a brief for the champions of a losing cause to admit that they were of stock as old as, or older than, the revolutionaries; that they were, in general, wealthier, and at least as intelligent; and that in the matter of mere numbers they were not inferior. The irrevocable judgment of the event was pronounced against them; their cause went down. But there is one further charge against the northern loyalists. Unlike their southern brethren they would not fight like their opponents. They relied too much upon the British government. Had they enlisted in equal numbers, had that government encouraged them more to resist and organize, the story might well have been different; but they were not filled with that furious enthusiasm which inspired their opponents, and their numbers failed to count. Yet no history of the American Revolution which either omits or unreservedly condemns them can pretend to give a true picture of New York, or any other colony, in the Revolution.

Against the loyalists, whether in Howe's camp or still remaining in New York, were arrayed their old antagonists, whose activities, especially in the Sons of Liberty, had brought about the great crisis. Of these there were three groups, the civil authorities, the army, and the mob. During the brief American occupation, the city went on as it had been for some months previous. The Provincial Congress deliberated, the Committee of Safety busied itself with the arrest, imprisonment and deportation of the Tories, the mob amused itself with rails and tar-buckets in assisting the

American authorities to suppress loyalist sentiment. With the coming of the army, many New Yorkers returned for a time to their old home. There was the greater part of Scott's brigade, with two regiments of MacDougall's command. There was the newly created New York Artillery, under the young Alexander Hamilton, as the successor of Lamb's artillery company, whose remnants had returned from the disastrous expedition to Quebec, leaving their leader there, a wounded prisoner. There were, besides, the city militia or train-bands, whose striking uniforms, and still more striking names—"Bold Forresters," and "Sportsman's Company" —enlivened the dull tints and more prosaic titles of the Continental regiments. These took their share in the defense of the city, though the latter, at least, do not, for the most part, seem to have engaged in actual fighting.

When the city fell, the whole scene was naturally altered. Even before that time the Provincial Congress and the Committee of Safety had fled; and from the occupation by the British until the evacuation, the history of the city and that of the state parted company. The city government, aside from the military regulations and authority, was carried on by a "vestry" appointed by General Robertson in December, 1777. The Committee of One Hundred was no more; Governor Tryon, within the narrow limits of the British lines, exercised his slight and nominal authority, until, restive under enforced inaction, he exchanged his civil office for a military commission, and, leading raids on the surrounding country, gained for himself an unenviable name in American history.

Yet though New York was a conquered and occupied town, those phrases, in the peculiar situation of affairs, by

no means carry the unhappy meaning which they usually bear. To a not inconsiderable number of New York's inhabitants, it is evident, the British army came not as enemies but as friends; not as conquerors but as deliverers; not as hireling foes of liberty, and instruments of tyranny, but as upholders of the old and settled order of government, which had too long been at the mercy of the radical mob. There is no doubt that their presence was actually welcomed by many of the citizens. The Lambs, the Willetts, the MacDougalls, the Sears, with greater figures, Scotts, Schuylers, and Clintons, were with the army; Jay and Duane with their colleagues in Congress. But there remained many of the old families, De Lanceys, Lispenards, Ludlows; and that shrewd gentleman, John Watts, with one son-in-law, the future Earl of Cassilis, on the British side; the other, "Lord" Stirling, fighting with Washington; and these loyalists were glad to have the British army there. On October 16, in fact, while Howe was engaged in the last movements of the campaign, he was presented with an address, signed by hundreds of names, congratulating him on his success.

There were two other reasons for general contentment with the new state of affairs. The one was the revival of business. The port was now open, and trade restored. The needs of the people and provision of the soldiers created a market which for many months had been almost as nonexistent as the goods to supply it. Mercantile interests took on new signs of life; and fashion reappeared. The presence of so many troops with their bright uniforms, their unaccustomed ways, and, above all, their complement of young officers, lent a new interest to society. Moreover the commanding general, Howe, with all his faults, was a genial

and hospitable gentleman; his aide, Captain Montresor, was an accomplished officer; the commandant, Colonel Pattison, who presently succeeded General Robertson, was still more affable, and soon became one of the most popular men in the city; while the talented Major André was one of its most brilliant social ornaments. Their affability was furthered by another circumstance. The New York loyalists were numerous and influential; and it was hoped, not wholly without reason or humanity, by the English government, that pursuing the policy of "the Sword and the Olive Branch" it might still be possible to conciliate the colonists, and, beginning with New York, that they might inaugurate a movement which would bring America to its old allegiance while overawing those determined to resist. In that the government and the commander were in accord; and the result was to the benefit of New York in the first period of the British occupation.

Thus almost the earliest care of the British commanders was to preserve the city in as good condition as possible. They came into a town deserted, it was estimated, probably with considerable exaggeration, by "nineteen-twentieths of its population." Hundreds of loyalists had been sent into detention by the Americans during their occupation; many more of both parties had fled from this "City of Warr"; and on their retreat they were followed by some thousands of their supporters; while "those who feared the consequences of remaining in a besieged town" and those who desired to escape militia duty joined them in exile. At once the assistant deputy-commissary-general, William Butler, was ordered by the commandant, General Robertson, to take an inventory of vacant houses and "derelict property." The stores

abandoned by the Americans were seized and, with the wharves, storehouses and adjacent land, were converted to the uses of the army and navy. For the rent of these facilities, as for that of the vacant houses assigned to the officers and their families, the government made itself responsible, save where the property was owned by those "outside the British lines"—that is to say "rebels"; and that rent was appraised by "respectable and disinterested citizens."

Moreover taxes were abolished and the government assumed the city charges for lighting, street-cleaning and repairs, the public works, even the care of the poor. For this last, in particular, in view of the enormous increase in rents and food, General Robertson appointed a citizens' committee of nineteen to solicit contributions. Among these names were many familiar as leaders in the city—the inevitable Isaac Low, Nicholas Bayard, James Jauncey, William Walton, Elias Desbrosses, Peter Stuyvesant, John Dyckman and others of like sort. These, with the police magistrates, were formed into a "vestry," after the English fashion, to take charge of the town. Though abandoned property was taken over by the British authorities, whenever the owners returned, it was restored to them; and after 1779 the customary rents and fees were paid to the proprietors of the wharves, if they were within the British lines. "Every pains," Butler avers, "was taken to prevent waste or destruction or improper persons from possessing such houses after their possessors left them," and at the end of the occupation a board of commissioners was appointed to adjudge the equity of all claims for them and for the property supplied to the army. Thus, though there were the inevitable waste of war and bitter recriminations on both sides, it would

seem that, in so far as the authorities were concerned, destruction and loss were minimized as much as possible. This was but natural, for, whatever motives of humanity and mercy were involved, it was to the advantage of the British to preserve as much as possible a town which was their home for the time being, and might be the means of the accommodation which to the end they sought unceasingly.

One of their chief concerns was an organ of news and of opinion to disseminate official proclamations and orders as well as to support their cause. Their coming had for the moment disrupted the newspaper world and New York for some weeks was without its usual supply of journals. John Anderson's *Constitutional Gazette,* founded in 1775, had lasted but a year. The *New York Chronicle* of James and Alexander Robertson had removed to Albany in 1771. After the destruction of his *New York Gazette,* Rivington had gone to London. The *Gazette and Postboy* had died in 1773. The "patriot publisher," Holt, had ceased to publish his *Journal and Advertiser* in New York in August, 1776, and on the advent of the British fled to Kingston, where he began publication again in July, 1777. Hugh Gaine had simultaneously betaken himself to Newark for some three months; so that the field was bare.

But it was not long unoccupied. Almost at once a certain Ambrose Serle seems to have been given charge of the *New York Mercury* by General Howe; while Gaine printed his *Mercury* at Newark, so that for some seven weeks there were two, one loyalist and one patriot. But Gaine soon turned loyalist, came back to New York and resumed control of his journal. Then Rivington returned with new type and presses

to issue what he had called at first the *New York Gazetteer; or the Connecticut, New Jersey, Hudson's River and Quebec Weekly Advertiser,* probably the most imposing name with which any such periodical was ever called upon to struggle. It did not struggle long; for he soon changed it to that of the *Royal Gazette;* and when the evacuation came, that being unsatisfactory to him or his public, it was altered to the *New York Gazette and Universal Register.* To these again was added the *Royal American Gazette,* published by the Robertsons, jointly or severally; and finally the *New York Mercury or General Advertiser,* founded by William Lewis in 1779 and continued, like the others, during the period of the British occupation.

Thus, whatever else they lacked during that period, New Yorkers did not want for newspapers. Nor was their reading confined even to this list. As in the earlier period of the Stamp Act disturbances, when seditious broadsides and newsletters and proclamations were printed at Woodbridge and smuggled in, so now the patriots found means to introduce their literature into the occupied city, providing their sympathizers there not only with an antidote to the inspired press of the authorities, but with a spice of mild adventure in so prosaic an occupation as the reading of the news—not lessened by the fact that it was for the most part ignored or winked at by the British authorities.

Yet, even so, reading the papers was far more substantial and prosaic an occupation than it is to-day when morning and evening alike bring their sensations. To our more sophisticated eyes, few things are more depressing than an eighteenth-century newspaper, especially in this period when in place of news or even newsletters of doings already old,

their choicest columns bear dreary dissertations on the problems of the time, interminable controversies, endless letters from "Cato" and "Cassandra," "Patriot" and "Citizen," and "Vox Populi." Then, as now, some entertainment lurks in advertisement. The reader finds the worthy Gaine sells at his place of publication, the "Bible and Crown" in Hanover Square, not merely his papers and pamphlets; writing material of all sorts; proceedings of the many bodies then engaged in passing resolutions and in making laws, quite in the modern fashion; but such various merchandise as an Italian Paste for the complexion, Moredant's Drops for all the ills of eighteenth-century flesh, Bibles and navigators' instruments, horsewhips and toothbrushes. He finds as well a multitude of notices of ships and shipping, runaway slaves, servants and apprentices, a riotous profusion of spirituous, vinous and maltous liquors in huge variety and almost incredible quantities, lots ranging from one drink to three hundred gallons. Mingled with them are the inevitable appeals to masculine and feminine vanity, the latest London fashions and the newest stuffs from British and continental weavers, ribbons and laces, silks, satins, shoes and stockings, and all the paraphernalia for the adornment of "society."

Thus, from the standpoint of the army and of the loyalists, the first winter in New York was the most pleasant period of that city during the war. At that time, in sharp distinction from the later years, food was cheap and plentiful; the markets overflowed with materials for good living. Dinners, balls and plays followed each other in rapid succession; and gambling, especially at what was then spelled "Pharaoh," was scandalously prevalent. The commander-in-chief found feminine charms, to which he was reputed to

be notably partial, quite to his liking. He was uplifted by the news that he was to be made Knight Commander of the Bath for his capture of New York. There seemed to him no occasion to follow up that success; and so slack were military operations that Cornwallis took occasion to visit his invalid wife in England. The army contractors reaped, it was reported, huge profits and money was plentiful; more plentiful than it had been since the close of the Seven Years' War, some thirteen years before. It was charged that man after man retired with a fortune of more than £150,000 in this "perfect carnival of plunder" and it was more than whispered that even the commanding general himself was no worse off for his share in this wholesale dishonesty of the contractors, engineers, barrack-masters and commissaries.

But the stay of Howe in New York was not wholly without its harsher side, however little that affected the commander-in-chief. Even before the final engagements which gave the city into his hands, the first of the two great personal tragedies which marked the American Revolution had taken place. The capture of Nathan Hale and his execution as a spy on September 22 had given that touch of grimness to the struggle which thus far it had lacked; and his treatment by Howe, however technically correct so far as the execution went, had embittered the feelings of his antagonists. The crowding of the city with the prisoners added another element of bitterness; and beside the rejoicings of the conquerors and the amusements to which they lent themselves, the sufferings of those prisoners soon revealed the darker side of the spectacle of war. The cruelty of Provost Cunningham made his name a synonym for all that was hateful in the

presence of those who were reckoned by the patriot party as invaders of their land, and the horrors of the "hulks" or prison ships in the harbor added another count against the invaders in the patriot minds.

Yet, with all of Howe's success, with all of the dejection of the patriots, even the events that first winter gave some promise of what was to be the character of the struggle then going on outside the city. For scarcely had the preparations for going into winter quarters been completed when the British general suffered a rude shock to his complacency. The 13th of December, 1776, ironically observes the English historian of the American Revolution, might well have been marked with a white stone in the calendar of a people observant of anniversaries and who retained the old belief that their national welfare and security did not depend on their own exertions but were in keeping of a higher power, for it was signalized by two events which to a New Englander of four generations back must have presented every appearance of special providence. One was the expressed determination of General Howe to suspend military operations until spring; the other was the capture of General Charles Lee by the British. The one relieved Washington's forces from further pressure and gave them time to recover from their misfortunes; the other relieved them and their commander from the activities of one of their most overrated and insubordinate officers.

Of these events the latter was atoned for by the exchange of Lee some months later; but the former was regarded as the most fatal of all decisions to the British cause. It was the business of the commander-in-chief to seek out and destroy the American army. He had been able to find it and defeat

it when he chose; but with his determination to go into winter quarters he virtually threw up the game which was in his hands. It was attributed to his love of ease and pleasure, and there is much in his conduct in New York and Philadelphia which seemed to give color to such charges. But in fact his decision was in accord with the school in which he had been reared. There was in continental practice a time for everything, a season for campaigning and a season for winter quarters. The rules of warfare which he followed, with an exactness so disastrous to his reputation in America, recognized these alternate periods of activity and recuperation as inseparable from the game of war which only the greatest of commanders had been able to break.

The return of Howe and his staff to New York was followed by "ten days of universal jollity," and the disposition of his forces to secure the city he had won. Six thousand men had been despatched under Clinton to Newport, instead of to Philadelphia, as it was said Clinton had preferred. Cantonments of troops, chiefly Hessians, were established between New York and Trenton—at Amboy, at New Brunswick, at Princeton, Bordentown, and Trenton itself, according to a plan described either as "masterly" or as "insensate folly" by his admirers or his critics. None of these bodies was large enough to hold out by itself; they were too far apart to render each other effective support; and none of them was entrenched. The posts at Trenton and at Bordentown, each with some 1500 Hessians, were commanded respectively by Colonel Rall and Count Donop. The outcome of this arrangement soon proved the critics were correct; and nothing in the whole course of the Revolution revealed so signally the fatal defect of this contempt of their oppo-

nents which marked the conduct of the British commanders than the disposition of the forces covering New York.

For scarcely was this ten days up when Washington's desperate attack upon these outlying posts and their capture put heart into a cause which seemed at its last gasp. It is a classic of American history how, crossing the Delaware with his little force, he threw himself upon the careless Hessians at Trenton and, with a loss of four wounded, overpowered Rall's force and compelled Donop to retreat. That news fell upon the British command in New York like a bombshell and brought to a sudden end the ten days of festivities. Cornwallis was despatched at once with eight thousand men, reached Trenton, stopped there over night—and the next morning found Washington at Princeton between the main British army and New York, surprising the British forces there, defeating them and driving them back toward the city, even threatening to capture Cornwallis' military chest at Burlington with its £70,000. That, at least, put the British commander "in a most infernal sweat" and he made probably the most rapid march of any British commander during the entire war, covering the distance between Trenton and New Brunswick in one day. But he was unable to catch Washington, who turned north to the high ground about Morristown and there remained unmolested by his opponents through the winter. Thither—so safe it was—came Mrs. Washington and wives of the American officers. Putnam occupied Princeton; and Congress returned to Philadelphia, which as the patriot capital rivalled New York in its gayety.

Such was the result of the counsel of despair which had finally led Congress from its retreat in Baltimore to confer

on Washington "full power to order and direct all things relative to the department and to the operations of war," and to his consequent success. Yet that success, though it was the turning-point of the Revolution and inspired men to go on, was not followed by an increase in the American forces. Again Howe lost his opportunity. With more than twenty thousand men at his command, he made no effort to attack the forces of Washington, which meanwhile sank from some six thousand to no more than three, so reduced that their commander wrote "all winter we were at their mercy, with sometimes scarcely a sufficient body of men to mount the guards, liable at every moment to be dissipated if they had only thought proper to march against us." To the loyalists it seemed that the American army was "mouldering away like a rope of sand"; and it may have seemed to Howe the better part to let it dissolve of itself.

The brilliant social season of the winter of 1776–7 was crowned in March by the investiture of General Howe with the Order of the Bath for his services in the campaign of 1776, the battles of Long Island and White Plains and the capture of New York. It was the first time—and the last—that such an honor was conferred in America; and the imposing ceremonies of the investiture lent a final touch to that season which even the social activities of the succeeding winter in Philadelphia scarcely equalled. No doubt Howe's achievements, magnified by distance, and by the hope of a speedy end to the disturbances as a result of his victory, looked well in Great Britain—before the news of Washington's exploit in New Jersey reached that far. Yet the investiture, in that light, had its ironic side; and it was not so greatly appreciated by his critics. In the bitter words of a

contemporary loyalist it was conferred on him as "a reward for evacuating Boston, for lying indolent on Staten Island for near two months, for suffering the rebel army to escape him on Long Island, and again at White Plains; for not putting an end to the rebellion in 1776 when so often in his power; for making such injudicious cantonments of his troops in New Jersey as he did; and for suffering 10,000 veterans under experienced generals to be cooped up in Brunswick and Amboy for nearly six months by 6000 militia under the command of an inexperienced general."

Nor is it without interest to note that in the very days that Howe received his new honor, the men opposed to him were preparing a new engine of revolution. On March 12, 1777, John Jay reported to the provincial constitutional convention the draft of the first state constitution, and it was "hastily accepted" on April 20; and on April 22, standing on a barrel in front of the court-house at Kingston that constitution was proclaimed. For the moment the Committee of Safety acted, as it had been acting, as the provisional executive of the new commonwealth, with R. R. Livingston as Chancellor and John Jay as Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court. In June the latter sent out a circular to call an election, recommending Peter Schuyler for governor and George Clinton as lieutenant governor, the returns to be made to the Committee of Safety. Doubtless to his surprise and certainly to the surprise of most men, Clinton was elected to both offices, chiefly, it was said, by the votes of the southern counties; and on July 30 he was inaugurated, standing, according to legend, on the same barrel before the Kingston court-house.

That constitution, with the British holding the lower

Hudson, the city and the western posts, was confined to the area about Albany, as far as the Highlands, Lake George and Lake Oneida—for even at this moment the men of the New Hampshire Grants were organizing the new state of "Vermont." But it was a notable document, and it existed for forty-four years. It revealed the same division of interests and opinions which characterized the movement which gave it birth. It was "popular" in that its officials were elected by the people; but a property qualification was required for the electors, and for the members of the Senate, but not for those of the Assembly. At its head stood the governor and a "Council of appointment," composed of the governor and four senators elected by the Assembly, empowered to name many local civil and military officials; while a "council of revision" had a limited veto on legislation. Religious freedom was secured; but though no color line was drawn, slavery was maintained. Such was the working compromise between the two allied but not identical elements now united in the revolutionary movement. In the disturbed situation of affairs the government came virtually into the hands of the Committee of Safety of the new "state" and its most active duties into those of a "Committee to Detect Conspiracies" which operated until the close of the war.* The latter, indeed, extended those operations into the city itself; for among its duties not the least was espionage, and almost from week to week its emissaries brought news of the British forces and of the general conditions in New York.

*There had been such committees in existence, but the third official act of the legislature was to create an extra-judicial body of "Commissioners for detecting and defeating Conspiracies." See V. A. Paltsits' introduction to the three volumes of minutes of this body which he edited, Albany 1909–10, an invaluable record.

These activities were not wholly undisturbed. In March Howe had sent Colonel Bird to Peekskill to capture and destroy the magazines left there under Colonel MacDougall, in spite of Washington's express commands. In April Cornwallis attacked and almost captured Lincoln's little command at Bound Brook; and Tryon was sent to seize a depot of supplies at Danbury, Connecticut; in answer to which Meigs led a party from New Haven in May to destroy the vessels and supplies at Sag Harbor.

Meanwhile more important events were on foot; and this summer of 1777 saw two great enterprises undertaken. The first to be set in motion was the expedition of Burgoyne from Canada. As in the preceding spring when Howe was to take New York and Carleton to advance from Canada, so now the same general plan was preserved, with other features which, the British hoped, would make success certain. Burgoyne, who had employed the winter in a visit to England to further his fortunes, replaced Carleton as commander of the projected expedition from the north. He was to come down by the Richelieu and the lakes with an imposing force, to be met by a like expedition from the south and still another under St. Leger from Ontario; cut off New England from the other colonies, and so end the war.

New York, in consequence, was filled with military preparations. Howe's army was put in condition for a great campaign; tents, baggage, artillery and supplies were collected and arranged; and as Burgoyne came on it seemed that the decisive stroke would fall and the American cause go down. General Clinton advanced to meet Burgoyne, or at least to divert support from Schuyler who opposed him. Even while the constitution of New York was being framed

it appeared that the people for whom it was fashioned would be brought again into their old situation—of "allegiance" or of "slavery," depending on the political ideas of the speaker. It is small wonder that, having adopted it on April 20, the members of the Constitutional Convention adjourned "precipitately" to prepare resistance to the threat of invasion. It was known that Carleton was negotiating with the Indian tribes and at the very moment that the New York Congress adjourned, representatives of the Six Nations were assembling in Quebec. On May 6 Burgoyne arrived and took charge of the projected expedition. A fortnight later Gates pleaded with the council of the Six Nations for their neutrality. St. Clair hurried to Ticonderoga, followed by Schuyler; and on June 15 Burgoyne began his advance from Three Rivers.

The story of Burgoyne's ill-fated expedition is a romance of American history. It began with every prospect of success. On July 6 he took Ticonderoga and the next day defeated the Americans at Hubbardton. As he advanced on Fort Edward the American general, Schuyler, who had but half his force, retired before him to Saratoga, where he was superseded by Gates, whom Washington sent to relieve him of command. There the British advance was checked. St. Leger defeated Herkimer but withdrew before the strategy of Colonel Gansevoort and Lieutenant-Colonel Willett and the reinforcements brought by Arnold, and sought refuge in Montreal.

Burgoyne's supplies ran low and Colonel Baum, sent to Bennington to capture those of the Americans, was repulsed by Stark. From every side the colonists rallied to resist invasion; and though on September 19 Burgoyne won the first

battle of Stillwater near Saratoga above Albany, he lost more than his opponents. He rejected the advice of his council of officers to retreat till retreat became impossible and on October 7 the second battle of Stillwater sealed his fate. Surrounded on every side, he was compelled to surrender to a now greatly superior force, and the Americans had won what was in many senses a decisive victory.

But meanwhile what of Howe; where were those 18,000 men with baggage and equipment, tents and artillery, which New York had seen preparing for a new enterprise? Incredible as it seemed, they took no part in the Burgoyne campaign. Almost at the very moment that Burgoyne started Howe moved 11,000 men to a position beyond New Brunswick, and it was expected that he would attack Washington's army, now increased to 7000 men by those who had returned to the colors as the spring came on. But the British retired, and though Howe advanced once more and even engaged the troops of Washington, he retired once more and his "two weeks fooling" in New Jersey came to nothing. There was still time to assist Burgoyne, but in the very days that he was so anxiously awaited in the north, Howe sailed on July 3, not for Albany but for the Chesapeake, in order, as a British historian remarks "to open up communications with Burgoyne marching from Canada." A week before he had written Burgoyne that, having heard of his victory at Ticonderoga, he intended to invade Pennsylvania, leaving Sir Henry Clinton in New York, "to act as circumstances may direct."

If a British historian writing at the end of the nineteenth century could believe that an advance upon the Chesapeake would assist an army coming down from Canada, the move

may not have seemed incredible to an eighteenth-century board of strategy in London; but it naturally seemed incredible to those on the ground. "Nothing under Heaven can save us," wrote one of the leading patriots when he heard of the projected expedition from Canada, "but the enemy's going southward." Heaven and Howe combined to save the patriot cause. Whether Howe was influenced by Whig politics; whether he preferred his own success to that of his cause; whether he hated Burgoyne and preferred to see him fail; whether he feared to be superseded by Carleton or Burgoyne if the campaign succeeded, or desired to counteract it with a great stroke of his own, or believed that it would be accomplished easily without him; or whether he made a mistake of judgment so gigantic and absurd as to be all but inexplicable in view of his achievements and ability, the whole thing, however providential, was as Washington observed, no doubt with deep thanksgiving, "unaccountable." In any event it saved the patriot cause; and among the many monuments erected to the saviors of America, General Howe surely deserves his little memorial.

At any rate he never came back to New York. From the moment of his departure Clinton took command, first as lieutenant-general; then, after Howe's resignation, as commander-in-chief of the British forces. But he made no move to assist Burgoyne. He had under his command some six thousand troops, a force which he believed, perhaps correctly, "was insufficient for the double operation of holding New York and advancing to the north." So through that fateful summer of 1777 he lay inactive waiting for reinforcements from England which would enable him to move. As

they began to arrive Clinton notified Burgoyne of his intention to make a diversion up the Hudson. In September he led four thousand men in that movement, feinted against Peekskill to draw Putnam away, then on October 6 developed his real attack at Stony Point, took Forts Clinton and Montgomery, commanded by George and James Clinton, and almost caught Governor Clinton himself. But there he stopped. Vaughan was sent on a marauding expedition which burned Kingston, whence the Legislature fled first to Dutchess County, then to the Livingston Manor near Albany. Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York—and Burgoyne surrendered.

It was the first great expedition of the sort that the new commander in New York was to launch against the Americans; and it marked the change already apparent in the attitude of those Americans, a change all for the worse from a British standpoint, for it made continued resistance absolutely certain. "I would," said Governor Clinton, "rather roast in hell to all eternity than be dependent on Great Britain or show mercy to a d——d Tory"; and in that spirit New York entered on a new stage of the revolutionary movement. Save as the headquarters of the army and the starting-point of those expeditions which characterized the next phase of the war, it ceased to play an active part in the hostilities such as it had in the preceding year; and its character, like its part, was in some measure changed.

Moreover, as the years went on and the quarrel deepened, not merely did Sir Henry Clinton's policy increase the bitterness of the conflict, but its conduct by the Americans gradually came into abler hands than those of the agitators who had begun it. The Americans had a case, and though

that case was at first obscured by the character and motives of many of the men who first championed it, though it was ignored by the British government, it had enlisted serious and honest men in its behalf. It was easy for its opponents at that time and for historians since to point out the joints in the armor of men like Samuel Adams and Patrick Henry, of John Hancock and Isaac Sears. It is not easy to decry the talents or the character of John Adams and John Jay, of Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall, of Schuyler and of Washington. Once the era of agitation was passed, American leadership fell to men who were no mere agitators or smugglers or disappointed politicians; and Great Britain faced a very different element in the colonies. The fact is that, all constitutional and political questions aside, the issue of the American Revolution was decided by the abilities of the leaders, and there the advantage lay with the Americans. Great Britain was just then peculiarly deficient in talent. She had no statesmen comparable to John Adams and John Jay; no negotiators comparable to Franklin; no writers comparable to Jefferson or Dickinson, save Burke; and, above all, no commander comparable to Washington.

Moreover as the constitutional struggle deepened into war and the British government despatched troops to repress disturbances and put down rebellion, the very fact of "invasion" rallied thousands to the American cause who otherwise would have taken but a languid interest or none in the controversy. And the character and conduct of men like Howe, contemptible alike to Puritan consciences by his devotion to pleasure, and to intelligent men by his failure to do his duty, did much to reconcile men to the position of the patriot leaders. Added to the conduct of the British govern-

ment, to the uncompromising attitude of the King and the incapacity and corruption of some of the ministers most closely concerned with this affair, Germain and Sandwich in particular, in comparison with the skill and devotion of Washington and his followers, the astuteness of Franklin, the ability of Robert Morris, the contrast proved too great. The most devoted of loyalists perceived it, and no condemnation heaped upon the heads of indolent and incompetent British agents was more deep and bitter than that of those who felt their cause betrayed by those appointed to support it. It was, then, easier for some of them to accept the transition to independence as the lesser of two evils, and remain in America, while so many of their fellows fled or were driven out when the imperial cause collapsed.

CHAPTER X

The British Occupation, 1777–1781

"I DO not know whether our generals will frighten the Americans," Lord North is reported to have said with shrewd humor, "but they certainly frighten me"; and, with few exceptions, that might be the epitaph of those who found in America the grave of their reputations. Great Britain was, indeed, hard put to it at this juncture to find men to command in the colonies; so hard put that it was even suggested that Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick should be entrusted with that task. Such senior officers as she had were, generally speaking, men who had seen little or no service since the Seven Years' War; and none in such a country as America. They were accustomed to European conditions, to formal warfare as then understood. They were, besides, in general, Whigs, and out of sympathy with Lord North and his administration, if not, indeed, with the whole policy of the war. They had a certain contempt for their opponents, a contempt which seemed in a measure justified by their successes about New York in 1776. They were unwilling to push matters to extremities, hoping to the last for some accommodation, holding to the end a sword in one hand and an olive-branch in the other. They looked upon the war not as a revolution but as a rebellion—and they underestimated Washington. They never realized that their very presence contributed to the resistance to the government; they believed that they could overawe the disaffected

and, this done, the American army would melt away of itself. And in these views they were encouraged to the very end by many of the loyalists about them.

Of no one in command in that great crisis was this truer than of General Sir Henry Clinton—save perhaps of Howe. Yet prior to his assignment to what was virtually an independent command in New York, he had exhibited qualities which seemed to indicate his fitness for that post. He was himself, in a sense, a New Yorker; for his father, who had been governor of Newfoundland, had been transferred to New York in 1741 and held the post of governor there for some ten years. There young Clinton had begun his military career as a member of the New York militia and only on his father's retirement had he gone to England with him, and there entered the British army. Doubtless not unaided by his family influence—for his cousin was the Duke of Newcastle—he had risen rapidly in the service. He had won reputation for himself in the Seven Years' War; by his cousin's influence he had, like most of those general officers with whom he served in America, been elected to Parliament. He had come to America with Howe, served with credit at Bunker's Hill, and so become a "local" lieutenant-general; then, accompanying Howe to Staten Island, he had further distinguished himself at the battle of Long Island and the capture of New York and so become a regular lieutenant-general and Knight of the Bath.

Such a man, almost, as it were, a native of New York, would seem to be an ideal appointee for such a post as he now held. Yet, it will be observed, this was his first even nominally independent, or at least detached, command; and it remained to see what he would do with it. With the force

at his disposal he could do little at best. He was able to take Kingston; he had captured Forts Clinton and Montgomery on the lower Hudson; but he was unable—it was said on account of low water—to join hands with Burgoyne, or even to divert the Americans from their concentration against that invader.

On the other hand the southern campaign had seemed to justify Howe's judgment. A week before Burgoyne had fought his first battle at Stillwater, Howe had defeated Washington at Brandywine. Two weeks later he had occupied Philadelphia. On October 4 he had beaten off Washington's attempt to surprise his camp at Germantown; and within six weeks he had secured Fort Mifflin and Fort Delaware which commanded the Delaware and made himself master of that region. Washington had retired to Valley Forge to endure the winter with what fortitude he and his troops could muster; so that, despite Burgoyne's failure, the campaign of 1777 seemed on the whole to have ended not unfavorably for the British. Who could suppose that Howe would let slip the opportunity to finish the war?

Burgoyne's troops were conveyed to cantonments about Boston; and that general, after a brief period there, was permitted by Washington to give his parole and go to England to defend himself in Parliament. His officers were not all so fortunate and a street in Cambridge still commemorates the name of Riedesel, whose wife followed him into captivity as she had followed him to war. Clinton after his expedition to Kingston returned to New York to chafe against inaction, and Howe settled down after his fashion and the fashion of his time to winter quarters in Philadelphia. In his cantonments at Valley Forge Washington held

together his ragged regiments with even more difficulty than at Morristown the preceding winter. Cut off from both New York and Philadelphia and their supplies, with often "not three days provisions in his camp and sometimes not a sufficiency for one day"; with Philadelphia only twenty-three miles away; "every military man," wrote Galloway, "indeed every man of common sense who was acquainted with the different force of the two armies . . . expected daily to see his camp assaulted."

And what was Howe's defense for his inaction? "The entrenched situation of the enemy . . . did not occasion any difficulties so pressing as to justify an attack upon that strong post during the severe weather, . . . and being certain of moving him from thence when the campaign should open, I dropped all thoughts of attack." But his chief reason was one which became a stock joke of the loyalists—though a bitter one—that of the lack of "green forage." It should be added, however, that he was not alone in this opinion, for Sir Charles Grey, the ablest and most energetic of his officers, agreed. Nor must we forget that the American climate was so totally different from that of England, the country in which they operated so unsuited to the British training and experience, and their success so far in open field fighting so pronounced, that they rested secure in the belief that they held the troops of Washington in the hollow of their hands.

They did not reckon on other factors in the case. The signature of a treaty with France and the arrival of Lafayette and his companions as earnest of more substantial assistance must have given pause even to Howe. At any rate he sent in his resignation, which was accepted in May, 1778. But, be-

fore he left, Philadelphia had an opportunity to profit socially by his visit as much or even more than New York in the preceding season, for his officers proffered him a great entertainment, the famous "Mischianza," with its mock tournament between the Knights of the Blended Rose and those of the Burning Mountain; and its fireworks in which "a figure of Fame proclaimed in letters of fire 'Thy laurels shall never fade'." There, at least, Fame was at fault; for, though he was considered again for the American command, he passed his life thereafter in England, his highest post that of command of a camp to repel a French invasion which never came. The inquiry which he and his brother courted in Parliament in 1779 failed to produce more than a verdict of "not proven" both to the charges of his incapacity, and to his counter-charges of lack of support. And his "Narrative" declaring that though he and his brother had stretched their powers of conciliation to the breaking-point this had not interfered with their efforts to win the war, has not yet convinced the world that he did the best he could. Nor did his personal character, though it made him popular with his officers, rehabilitate his reputation, however much it may have added to the social prestige of Philadelphia and New York, in the two winters of his stay in the American colonies.

The French treaty altered the whole character of the war. The British government sought to break its force by a new effort to conciliate. It renounced the right to tax the colonies, except for purposes of trade regulation; and it appointed a committee of three men, Lord Carlisle, Governor Johnstone, and William Eden, brother of the royal governor of Maryland, who left England to carry the proposals to

By courtesy of the New York Public Library.

KIP'S BAY WITH THE SHIPS OF THE BRITISH FLEET AT ANCHOR, AUGUST 12, 1778.
From the original water-color sketch by Archibald Robertson of the British Engineers.

America—a week after a French fleet under Comte d'Estaing had sailed to that same destination with more substantial offerings.

With this, New York, which had for the time being been condemned to inaction, came again into the main current of the war. If Philadelphia was to be evacuated, it must be before the French fleet blocked the Delaware, and in consequence on June 18, 1778, that movement was begun under Clinton's direction. His advent was most unfortunate for his reputation; for as Washington had earlier placed himself between Cornwallis and New York and won the battle of Princeton, so now he intercepted Clinton and won the battle of Monmouth. Thence Clinton escaped by a night march by way of Sandy Hook to the security of the British fleet which met him there and transported his forces once more to New York. In such inglorious fashion the city regained its place as the centre of the war.

Clinton was just in time. Even while he was withdrawing his forces, there arrived off the Virginia coast the French admiral d'Estaing, with a strong fleet and some 4,000 men; and though he came five days too late to intercept Clinton, he provided the Americans with what they had previously lacked, an adequate naval force. It was apparently planned at first by Washington and d'Estaing to attack New York; and the British commanders made their dispositions accordingly. The officers and crews of the transports and merchant ships volunteered to serve on the men-of-war, the land troops as marines; and, thus reinforced, Admiral Howe took his squadron down to Sandy Hook, anchored his vessels broadside to the channel with spring anchors, planted a battery to command his right, and there awaited the superior French

fleet. On July 11 d'Estaing's ships appeared, and it seemed certain that greater New York was about to witness the great spectacle of a naval battle for the first time in its history.

But it was disappointed. D'Estaing hung about for ten days, then on July 11 made as if to enter; but the odds seemed too formidable despite his superiority in tonnage. He was persuaded that his larger ships could not manœuvre in water of insufficient depth; and so sailed away to Newport where 5,000 British troops under General Sir Robert Pigott were then besieged by the Americans under General Sullivan of Long Island fame. Hardly had he gone when there began to straggle in the ships of Admiral Byron, shattered by a storm; and Admiral Howe set out to follow d'Estaing. He found the French in Newport harbor whence they emerged to fight, but another tremendous storm dispersed the fleets. The French put into Boston to refit; Howe back to Sandy Hook; thence to Boston, but finding the French laid up there, came back again to New York and laid down his command, disgusted with the appointment of a new commission to negotiate with the Americans and with the conduct of the war.

It was not until September 16 that Byron's squadron got together at Sandy Hook, the fleet being meanwhile under command of Rear-Admiral Gambier; and though it put out again, it encountered a terrible storm and had to put back this time to Rhode Island, and so to the West Indies. Thus New York saw little of the sailors, as the naval operations were transferred to the Caribbean, until later in the war. Meanwhile Sullivan was not more fortunate at Newport than he had been at Long Island; for Clinton was able to

raise the siege. He was not the man, however, to plan and carry out a great campaign; indeed it may be fairly assumed that the ill-success of Burgoyne and Howe made him the more disinclined to such a policy. The one he adopted in place of that, however, was probably, on the whole, the most disastrous that could have been conceived, if the object was to bring the colonies again into relation with the mother-country; for it was a policy of predatory expeditions.

There were two plans which might have had some measure of success in ending this conflict between what an English military writer has called "the blind, unreasoning, unaccommodating temper of the English government and the selfish, partisan, ignoble motives of those who were really the prime movers of the Revolution." It is, he goes on to say, "almost a relief when the sword is drawn; he has then to deal with men, not schemers; he has then pictures to gaze at of an earnest people fighting for independence, or, on the other hand, an outnumbered army fighting for duty; and he has then such figures to worship as that purest and noblest in history, George Washington, for the proper revelation of whose character the losses of that war's continuance may be counted to all time as a clear gain."

This being true, what could have averted or made unsuccessful the efforts of the "schemers"? On the one hand it would have been possible merely to blockade the coasts and let the colonists fight it out among themselves, as was then proposed in certain British circles. The war begun, it might have been possible to seek out Washington's army and destroy it, as many persons urged. It might, as the government of Lord North hoped, even have been possible to find means of accommodation before it was too late. But

among all the many wrong ways the British authorities took to end the conflict the last and worst was that of invasion of separate districts, ravaging, plundering, destroying and irritating one region after another till the whole continent was arrayed against them; of using foreign troops; of failing to strike at the heart of resistance wherever it was, by either statesmanship or force; and alienating every element in the colonies. By the time that Howe resigned, this was well on the way to the accomplishment of its inevitable result; and the temper of America had changed.

Chief among the exploits of Clinton's fatal policy was the great plunder raid to the Chesapeake in May, 1779, under General Mathew, which destroyed, it was estimated, over £300,000 worth of property. For such expeditions there was one excuse given by their perpetrators. It was that they were not able to make the Americans fight, and that as this was war, the only course left was to make the country feel its weight by destruction. But, as always in the case of a high-spirited people, a policy of "frightfulness" has the precisely opposite result from that intended. It does not terrify, it merely exasperates. Thus while Washington awaited the arrival of the French reinforcements, first under d'Estaing, then under Rochambeau, the British general did what he could to rouse the spirit of the Americans.

This was not all he did. By December, 1779, he was finally persuaded to engage in the southern campaign. With Admiral Arbuthnot he besieged and took Charleston, with six thousand prisoners and four hundred guns, at a loss to his own forces of less than three hundred killed and wounded. Thence, flushed with what was really an extraordinary victory, he returned to New York, leaving Cornwallis to prose-

cute the war in the south with such great initial success and such disastrous consequence, while he himself went on with his provocative policy of raids.

Yet New York, even so, was not without its thrills. The arrival of d'Estaing's fleet had seemed to promise not only a great naval battle but the possibility of a joint attack by the French fleet and Washington's army, which was dissipated by the failure of d'Estaing to fight. There was the fierce winter of 1779 when the authorities were assured solemnly—and no doubt truthfully—that the ice on the North River was eighteen feet thick, and that the Hudson as far north as Albany—and presumably much farther—was "mere terra firma." It was feared that the American army, artillery and all, taking advantage of this act of Providence, might march across this natural bridge and seize the town. In consequence, with most of the regular army absent in the south, the commandant, General Pattison, against the advice of his officers, called the citizens to arms. More than 4,000 of them responded; and, reinforced by what sailors could be spared from the ice-bound fleet, New York was manned against an attack—which never came. For Washington, even had be been able, was not disposed to risk his army on such a cast. He was expecting reinforcements; and the British army was never so useful to him and to his cause as when it was comfortably quartered in New York.

But what the city escaped the country round about suffered in double measure; for, from the moment of British occupation to their departure, the "Neutral ground" for some thirty miles round about became the scene of a struggle which partook of all the evils of the worst of all con-

flicts, a guerrilla war. This territory between the lines became the common hunting-ground of the irregulars of both sides; and there was nothing to choose between them. In the main the so-called "Cowboys" operated from the British side, the "Skinners" from the lines of the Americans; taking turns in burning, plundering and harrying the inhabitants of this unfortunate No-man's land. In every direction, through Westchester County, New Jersey, Long Island, and far into Connecticut, the country was terrorized. The plunder was disposed of indiscriminately to both sides, but inasmuch as New York was the better market, most of it found its way thither; and it was more than suspected that Cowboys and Skinners had a working agreement among themselves as to its distribution and disposition, sharing the profits of this abominable trade with more or less equality. It is the darkest chapter of the war for American independence; nor did its evil results end with the conclusion of that conflict, for it not merely embittered that struggle but the spirit then engendered was projected into succeeding generations, and even into history. The best that can be said for it is that the better element on each side condemned it in unsparing terms and did what they could to suppress it. Its worst side is that Sir Henry Clinton's raiding policy seemed only the continuation of this wretched business and appeared to give it countenance.

Yet it is fair to say that from motives of policy no less than of humanity, the British did not at first resort to it; and for a time even repressed the efforts of the loyalists to avenge themselves for the loss and destruction of their property at the hands of their fellow-countrymen who looked upon the "Tories" as traitors to America, and treated them accord-

ingly. It is no less fair to say that as the hope of accommodation faded, they gave way and authorized, even when they did not share in, that raiding policy with which the name of Tryon is particularly associated. That policy was not merely wrong; it was a fatal error. While it is not probable that the quarrel could have been composed, especially after Burgoyne's defeat and the French alliance, it is certain that the raids did no good from a military standpoint, and they hardened the opposition of the Americans to a point where any concessions would have been fruitless. It is small consolation to a true American to find too-patriotic chroniclers almost in the same breath commending the patriots and condemning the loyalists for almost identical exploits. There is never much to choose between the bands who take advantage of civil strife to wage irregular war with its attendant horrors of rapine and plunder; and it is the part of wisdom, no less than that of charity, to recognize that such incidents had better be left to the dishonorable oblivion which they deserve than be acclaimed by either side as part of any struggle—least of all a struggle for liberty.

Besides this there was another phase of the war which directly affected the city. It was the American prisoners in the jails and especially the hulks converted into jails. Even the troops at Valley Forge suffered less than their comrades imprisoned in New York. Worst were the prison-ships with their morning call of the guard, "Rebels, turn out your dead," for their sufferings were even worse than those of the loyalists earlier imprisoned under the court-house at Kingston where the provincial convention sat above, by special resolution permitting its members to smoke to cover the "nauseous and disagreeable effluvia" which rose through the

floors. The eighteenth century at best was not so notable for its humane treatment of all sorts of prisoners as for the prison reformers who were inspired by that treatment to agitation for reform. But reform had not yet penetrated Europe, much less America. It did not yet consider the prisoners of peace, much less prisoners of war. In all the chronicles of the period, suffering and death, especially by smallpox, against which inoculation was not yet used, are noted as among the most fearful consequences of hostilities in these years; and in New York not least.

Meanwhile what of the city itself in these dark days; how was it governed and how did it conduct itself? To all intents and purposes a garrison town, after the departure of General Robertson it came under the control of his successor, Commandant Pattison, "the gunner who governed New York." He was, by all accounts, a capable, courteous and humane officer, whose memory is still honored in the corps to which he belonged, the Royal Artillery; and in so far as the peculiar circumstances in which he found himself permitted, he governed well and wisely. He was under no illusions as to his position and that of his government, nor as to the attitude of the Americans. Before he took up his new assignment he had written his brother from Philadelphia:

"I wish it was in power to give you very pleasing accounts of the state of affairs in this distracted country; but indeed it is almost a distracting consideration for any one who knows them, as we do by experience, to think of them. Ministers have been deceived, and have never known the true state of this country; if they had, they would never have entered into a war with it. I own I had very mistaken no-

tions myself when in England of reducing America to obedience by conquest. I have totally changed my sentiments. . . . I will confess to you that, by what I have seen and heard, I am fully of opinion that all the efforts Great Britain can make will never effectually conquer this great continent, in which, notwithstanding all that has been said of friends to Government here, and friends to Government there, yet there is scarcely one to be met with from one end of it to the other. We have not only armies to combat with, but a whole country. . . . One Royal Army has been already obliged to do what is not in our history to be met with —to lay down their arms and surrender as prisoners of war; another army at New York in a state of alarm; and the Grand Army here penned up within the narrow limits of two or three miles. . . . In short, unless thirty thousand men more, added to the thirty thousand we already have, can be sent hither early in the year, the wisest thing would be to get rid of the contest in the best manner you can . . . persuade them to revoke their Declaration of Independence, then make one general Act of Oblivion—give up entirely the point of taxation, and restore the whole country to the state it was in 1763."

Such were the sentiments of the man into whose charge New York was given in 1779. By that time it had arrived at the status which it was to hold until the end of the war. It was scarcely even a garrison town, since the soldiers were for the most part not stationed in the city proper but on Staten Island, which became the chief receiving and cantonment station of the main body of the army when it was not on active service. The reasons for this are the obvious ones which always move military commanders to keep their

troops as far away from the temptations of city life as possible—though there were not, in those days, quite the temptations of to-day. The city was larger than it had ever been; for though many of its inhabitants had fled, their numbers were more than compensated for by the influx of refugees from outside the lines seeking what safety and comfort they could find in New York. It was estimated that from 17,000 it grew to 30,000 in those years, including many slaves who fled from their masters to the comparative freedom of New York. Comparative only in many cases, for it is evident from the many advertisements of slaves to be sold that slavery was not extinguished, save in certain instances.

Nor was the life of the city without hardships little known before. It was no small problem merely to feed this multitude; and it is a significant circumstance that the first item of news in the newspapers is the price of bread established by the authorities almost from day to day. The poor were a tremendous problem, perhaps the chief question of the time; and every effort was made to ameliorate their condition. The theatre was maintained scarcely less for their benefit than for the amusement of the actors and the audience; and its popularity is attested by the fact that it contributed some £9,500—less expenses—to their maintenance. To the poor-fund went all the profits of the ferries, under supervision of the commandant; and in every direction means were sought to lessen the sufferings of these destitute and often starving refugees.

Food grew scarcer and more expensive with the term of occupation; and the only thing which seems to have been cheap, curiously enough, was claret. Tea was 18s. a pound. Grain, after the first years of the war, was brought largely

from Ireland. Beef seems to have been provided largely by the activities of Cowboys and Skinners, whose names were obviously derived from their chief occupation of cattle stealing; though it is apparent that this source of supply could not be depended on indefinitely, much less regularly. New York, in fact, was virtually a besieged town; so recognized and so administered increasingly with the years. Every stranger arriving in the city had to report himself to the commandant; the citizens formed a night-guard; all cabmen and all publicans had to have a license from the military authorities; and punishment was inflicted by them, whipping, stocks, imprisonment, fines, or, worst of all, deportation beyond the lines into that frightful No-man's land where no man's life was safe.

Yet even life in a beleaguered town must have its lighter side; and this period of the British occupation was no exception to that rule. Indeed it was a relatively gay period till the end approached. Never at any time in its long history, perhaps, has New York had that element so essential to a gay society, a superabundance of eligible young men, not very busy, and with time and money to spend, as it had in these years in the persons of the young officers.

It has been observed that the great emergencies of life seldom seem as important to us when we are actually in them as at a later time or to others; and it is doubtless fortunate that this is so. As one reads the formal history of the struggle for American independence, the eloquence of the orators, the sufferings and courage of the fighting-men, the state documents of the diplomats and legislators and constitution-makers; as he reflects upon the great issues at stake, the wounds and suffering, the infinite complexities of the

event, he is apt to regard all these as something hardly real, and even the characters as having as little in common with us as the events in which they played their parts are like those of to-day. The glamor of the past removes them from us, and sets them apart from those who are absorbed in the common affairs of life. In such a view the British occupation of New York appears a very different thing to us than it seemed to those who experienced it. To them it was, if not precisely an every-day affair, a part of life, not of history; and in their new status they accommodated themselves to it in ways that seem at times little less than surprising.

One thing was notable; it was the relaxation of manners and even morals brought about by the peculiar circumstances as well as the importation of the atmosphere not only of Europe but of a military camp into what had been but lately a rather quiet and commercial atmosphere of distinctly "middle class" society. Americans, even New Yorkers—in those days—were more Puritanical than Europeans, especially army officers; and it was a shock, even to devoted loyalists, to see the increase of drinking and gambling produced by their presence. It requires neither deep investigation into the private papers of the time, nor any great historical imagination to perceive that the presence of so many gay young blades caused as much disturbance among the mothers of New York as among their daughters—though of a somewhat different character.

Many things were changed. In a spasm of virtue the Continental Congress had closed the little theatre in John Street a year before, because, as rumor went, the Boston representatives were fearful lest the morals of the Americans would be weakened by play-acting, cock-fighting and horse-racing, to

say nothing of card-playing—a decision which must have pained or amused certain delegates from other parts of the continent. This danger the British confronted with their customary courage, and one of their first acts was the foundation of a Garrison Dramatic Club. Nor is it without interest to note that, according to tradition, the first public school established in New York owed its origin to this period; and almost, if not quite, the first effort at organized public charity, with which, in some fashion, both the theatre and the school had some connection. It was noted, moreover, naturally enough, that the number of public functions, balls, receptions, teas and dinners, enormously increased; so that, at the beginning of the occupation at least, whatever else it was, New York was gay. There were flirtations and marriages; there were "carryings on" and scandals; there were drinking and gaming-bouts; there were elopements and duels, in fact all the elements of the best *"ton"* of the Old World.

There was plenty of "society"; especially after the return of the army from Philadelphia. Indeed, the coming of that army was, as in the preceding winter, the great, if not the greatest, social event in the history of those cities. Besides the presence of the commanders, Howe, Clinton and Cornwallis, Knyphausen and Riedesel, and lesser lights, there was an infinity of young and often noble officers, many to be distinguished on later fields. Among them, though no great social character, was perhaps the best officer of them all, Banastre Tarleton, lieutenant-colonel and actual commander of the cavalry of Cathcart's British legion, better known as Tarleton's "Green Horse," from the color of their facings, whose exploits in raids about New York made them the most active and most feared of all the army. There was

Cathcart himself, then Sir William, later Baron Cathcart, commander of those "Caledonian volunteers" transformed into the "British legion." That officer provided one of the romances of the British occupation for he presently married Elizabeth Eliot, daughter of the lieutenant-governor of New York. There was the Marquis of Lindsay, Lord William Murray, Lieutenant-Colonel Harcourt, on his way to an earldom, and among them the most attractive and romantic figure of them all, John André.

Thanks to the peculiar situation of New York in the conflict, there was not much for them to do in a military way. Many went with Clinton on his greatest effort of the war, the siege and capture of Charleston in the winter of 1779–80; and many remained with Cornwallis on his southern campaign. But many stayed in New York and there amused themselves. The re-opened John Street Theatre occupied the energies of many. The surgeon-general, Beaumont, was manager; Major Williams of the artillery the chief tragedian, much fancied in Macbeth and Hamlet; Colonel French the low comedian; and these, with young De Lancey, André, and many more whiled away the tedium of garrison life.

They entertained themselves no less by literary exercises, in which André played a leading part. Even now there is humor in his once famous metrical description of Lee and Wayne's unsuccessful raid which he modelled on the ballad of Chevy Chase under the satirical title of the "Cow Chace," with its stanzas which begin

> "To drive the kine one summer's morn
> The Tanner took his way.
> The calf shall rue, that is unborn,
> The jumbling of that day."
>
> . . . . . .

with Wayne's speech

"Oh ye, whom Glory doth unite
Who Freedom's cause espouse
Whether the wing that's doomed to fight
Or that to drive the cows.
. . . . . .

"I under cover of th' attack
Whilst you are all at blows,
From English-Neighborhood and Tinack
Will drive away the cows.

For well you know the latter is
The serious operation,
And fighting with the Refugees
Is only—demonstration."

The spirit which animated them was that of André's favorite song:

"Then, soldiers, why,
Should we be melancholy, boys?
Why, soldiers, why,
Whose business 'tis to die."*

To that society was introduced at this time the custom of a dinner at four in the afternoon, with blinds drawn and candles lighted, which was a novelty in New York. Nor was entertainment confined to the city proper or to drama and literature. Across the river lay the village of Brooklyn with a famous inn, famous especially for what would be called nowadays its "fish-dinners" or "sea-food," the Ferry House, first kept by the patriot Waldron, then, when he took service in the American army, by Loosley and Elms, who took down their sign of the King's Head from their tavern on Brownjohn's Wharf and moved it

*Winthrop Sargent, *Life of Major André*, p. 236 ff.

across the river. There they catered especially to the officers and made the place a centre of social life. There were promoted cricket-matches, horse-races, bull-baitings, boxing matches, even games of golf, for which latter purpose the publisher Rivington agreed to furnish not only clubs but "veritable Caledonian balls." Near there was the race-course about Beaver Pond; and the sport there was apparently not wholly masculine, for at least on one occasion was announced a "ladies' subscription purse of £50" and "a race by women—quarter-mile heats—best two in three; the first to get a Holland smock and chintz gown, full trimmed, of four guineas value, the second a guinea and the third half a guinea." Besides which the audience could listen to "God Save the King, played every hour."

Moreover as the centre of British operations and the headquarters of the army New York was not limited to the presence of the resident officers. At some time or other almost every British commander of note in those days found his way thither to lend his presence to the entertainment afforded by the constant comings and goings of the troops and the ships. This was taken advantage of to offer and receive hospitality of every kind, dinners and balls and assemblies and parties large and small. Hither came Admiral Rodney with the future hero of Trafalgar, Nelson, and many of his companions and officers. And it is not without interest to recall that in September, 1781, occurred the first visit of a Prince of Wales to America. "In compliment to his American subjects"—however ironical it sounds—George III was graciously pleased to allow his second son, the sailor prince, later William IV, to accompany Admiral Digby to New York. He was a genial youth of democratic manners and

sportsmanlike tastes, as becomes a Prince of Wales; and he played the part assigned to the heir to the British throne as well as his successors. He was welcomed by the young people of the town as effusively as such princes always are. He took part with gusto in all the numerous festivities arranged for him; and there is an amusing story in the life of the American author, Fitz-Greene Halleck, how one of the future King's companions, skating with the Prince, rescued his distinguished playmate from drowning when the uncourtierly ice broke under the young Prince. Nor is it out of place, perhaps, to record the fact that certain adventurous patriots even planned to kidnap him, though the plan broke down.

Such was the situation which confronted visitors like the Baroness Riedesel, the heroic wife of the commander of the German troops, who, after the manner of her Teutonic ancestors, had followed her husband to war, carrying her children with her. First to England, then to Canada, then with Burgoyne's expedition, then to Cambridge as a prisoner, then to the neighborhood of another college town to be, Charlottesville, Virginia, so to New York in the winter of 1779–80, she had made her devious way, cheerful, courteous, making friends wherever she went. There she was first settled in Tryon's town house, which he put at her disposal; then in General Clinton's country-seat, whither she fled from the small-pox epidemic which raged in the city that year. There she took part as the guest of honor at the celebration of the Queen's birthday, "or rather," she observes, "the day fixed upon for its commemoration for the convenience of the milliners and dressmakers."

By the time she reached New York the strain of war and

scarcity was felt. She could afford but one dinner-party a week because food was so excessively dear. How dear it was, in fact, we know from the report of a spy sent from the Commission for Detecting Conspiracies, who, two years before, had taken pains to note the prices down. Even then wood was £5 a cord; mutton and veal, eighteen pence a pound; cabbage, two shillings a head; milk, eighteen pence a quart; damaged flour, thirty-two shillings a hundredweight; and other flour unattainable.

She was disturbed by the ravages of a malignant fever which swept through the city and almost cost her husband's life in the ensuing spring; and in the summer she was prostrated by the terrific heat. So in 1781 she established herself on Long Island, and nothing better typifies the altered character of affairs than the fact that there she was continually harassed by fear of the Americans who constantly annoyed the British posts—and actually carried off one of her acquaintances, Colonel Maybaum, from his bed. In July 1787 she left, distributing her thirty cords of firewood among the poor, and turning back her lovely mahogany furniture to the Commissary—to be burned, she records sorrowfully, by the Americans when they finally re-took the town.

Her experiences on Long Island, in fact, are characteristic of the later history of the place and its experiences of the war. For the Americans were pressing the British more and more. They were not content even with mere raids and the capture of outlying German officers. Perhaps the most daring of their exploits was the recapture of Stony Point which had been taken by Clinton in May, 1779. Two months afterward, on the 15th of July, six hundred Americans under

Wayne retook the place in twenty minutes, with a loss of four men; against an equal force of British, all, or nearly all of whom were killed, wounded, or captured. They failed to take Verplanck's Point and were compelled to evacuate Stony Point almost immediately; but they accomplished their object which was to keep their opponents in constant fear of like exploits. Another followed closely with an extraordinarily daring attempt on Paulus Hook which was attacked by surprise, a part of the British fortifications taken, and the whole only saved by reinforcements hurried from the main body of troops. Even these could not prevent the loss of half the garrison though they perhaps prevented the loss of stores and guns.

But from the summer of 1779 throughout the rest of the British occupation it is evident that the garrison was never without apprehension of a like exploit; and with these and their own counter-raids their time was well occupied in excursions and alarms—but apparently mostly in alarms. Only one great and serious, even tragic, incident marked that period; the capture and execution of the most brilliant ornament of New York society, Major John André. It is one of the best known stories of the war of the American Revolution, how Benedict Arnold, one of the ablest of the patriot officers, irritated by his treatment at the hands of men less able and less deserving than himself, as he believed; in debt, and generally disgruntled; sought and was given command of West Point; how he corresponded with Carleton in regard to the betrayal of that post; how the young André, burning to distinguish himself, was employed in the negotiation, and returning from his interview with Arnold, was picked up, almost within the British lines, by

three of those "irregulars" who operated in No-man's land; was turned over to the Americans, and presently tried and executed as a spy. That, strictly speaking, he was not, however proper his execution under the rules of war. In a sense this tragic episode of September, 1780, was symbolic of the approaching end, despite the initial successes of Cornwallis in the south. For in the very months that Arnold planned his treachery, there had landed in Newport, which Clinton had evacuated in preparation for his southern expedition, 6,000 French troops under Rochambeau. There they lay supported by the fleet of d'Estaing, in easy reach of Washington, who had hurried to counteract the treachery of Arnold and hold the Hudson himself. In July following they joined him, marching across Connecticut without molestation; and thence they marched with him to co-operate with de Grasse's fleet and the troops he landed at Jamestown thus cooping up Cornwallis at Yorktown and compelling his surrender.

But what was Clinton doing all this time? Why did he not check this great encircling movement; why did he not go out and fight, or at least send his ships and men in time to save his colleague from such disaster as had overtaken Burgoyne? Surely he knew something of it; surely he had seen the ill effects of lack of co-operation at least once before. Yet at this greatest crisis of the war he lay supine. Cornwallis surrendered on October 19; on that very day Clinton sailed from New York to his assistance. He arrived in time to see the end. Had he come a short week sooner the result might have been different. Was he afraid of Washington after Monmouth; was he afraid that the Franco-American army was destined to New York; was he afraid that his own reputation might suffer, or that Corn-

wallis's would be too greatly exalted; was he merely afraid, or jealous, or merely dull and outgeneralled?

The answers to those questions have been various and conflicting. The patriotic historian of the American Revolution regards this, like similar phenomena throughout the conflict, as due to the special concern of Providence in the cause of liberty and America—and he may, of course, be right. To a more cynical generation the old Homeric device to explain the workings of the human mind under divine suggestion has not seemed enough; and even to the skeptical eighteenth century it seemed inadequate. One answer may, perhaps, be found in the later career of the two men. Clinton never was given a high command again, and Cornwallis, who returned a fiery reply to Clinton's "Narrative" in defense of his inaction, gained great and enduring reputation as governor-general of India.

Over this last episode was written the epitaph of most British operations in America, "Too late." Whether Clinton acted—or refrained from action—from accident or design or jealousy, overcaution, overconfidence, or mere incompetence, we may never know. At any rate the last expedition from New York was the most disastrous to the British cause even of Clinton's exploits; and with its failure to relieve Cornwallis even he could see the end was fast approaching. In May, 1781, he resigned his post to Carleton and New York saw him no more. Pattison had already gone, driven from his post by ill-health; and the last act of New York's share in the revolutionary drama was carried on by other characters and by other means than war.

CHAPTER XI

The Evacuation, 1781–1783

SAMUEL JOHNSON, dictionary-maker and philosopher, once observed that "There are very few things in the world of which we do not say with some regret, 'This is the end.'" But it is probable that, among those few, those most concerned would have admitted that the evacuation of New York by the British troops on November 25, 1783, held a high place. The departure of those forces was, naturally, a most agreeable circumstance to the Americans, who, for the first time, were left wholly free to follow the devices and desires of their own hearts. It can have been scarcely less grateful to the British who were now relieved from the contemplation of their humiliation, and permitted to seek on other fields some compensation for the laurels they had lost in that "grave of reputations," America.

The evacuation of New York was a great event, in that it was the final scene of the long Revolutionary drama, the ultimate symbol of the freedom of the colonies. But it was not the last act of the play; it was rather the epilogue; for the play proper had been over for some time. When, almost exactly two years earlier, the army of Lord Cornwallis had marched out of its entrenchments at Yorktown, between the files of French and American soldiers, and stacked its arms, their surrender marked the real conclusion of the great conflict. On that occasion, it is said, some drum-major, nameless now but a man worthy to be remembered for his humor

and insight, ordered his men to play a tune, then popular, entitled "The World Turned Upside Down." And, as the drums which had been beaten for the attack on Louisburg, drawn from their long rest to inspire the Americans at Bunker Hill, served as a symbol of the beginning of the war, so the music which accompanied the surrender of Yorktown symbolized the end.

But in the two years since the world had been turned upside down by the success of the American colonists, it had found time and opportunity for some readjustment to its altered position. Lord North had resigned, and first Rockingham, then Shelburne, had become prime-minister of England. Savannah and Charleston had been evacuated by the British troops; the French forces in North America had left for the West Indies; preliminary articles of peace had been signed between Great Britain, and the United States, France and Spain. Hostilities had ceased. The independence of the United States had been recognized by most of the European powers. A formal and definitive agreement had been entered into by the belligerents and Washington had delivered his farewell address to an army already beginning to disband. The British forces in New York remained, therefore, almost the only remnant of a conflict now at an end. They lagged superfluous on a stage where their presence had already become an anomaly, and was rapidly becoming a nuisance.

To our eyes they were no very formidable force. On paper there was, indeed, an imposing show of some sixty regiments, line, cavalry, artillery, guides, pioneers, American loyalists, and Hessians. They included not merely the troops in and about New York, but, with the exchange of

prisoners, many of Burgoyne's men as well as those of Cornwallis, virtually all His Majesty's forces in the thirteen colonies—some thirty-four thousand men according to the official return of those forces in June, 1782. But His Majesty did not have that number of men then, and he had much fewer thereafter. The strength of his army was by no means proportional to the number of its organizations. By losses, sickness and, above all, by desertion, which increased rapidly after Cornwallis' surrender, every regiment was below its normal fighting strength. Some were mere skeleton organizations; and the conclusion of hostilities with the reduction to a peace establishment, which preceded the evacuations, cost the English heavily. Many of their own men, and perhaps even more of the foreign troops, preferred to remain in America; and one of the curious results of the American Revolutionary War was the addition to the population of the United States of thousands of men who but recently had borne arms against it. What was still more curious was that these, for the most part, were welcomed by the Americans as desirable additions to their numbers. What was most curious of all was that the Hessians, so-called, whose addition to England's army in the United States had been one of the bitterest grievances of the rebellious colonists, seem to have been welcomed no less heartily than men from the British Isles.

Yet according to the standards of the time and place, the British forces, in spite of their losses, were still numerous and powerful, superior at every point to the American army, apart from its French auxiliaries. Besides them, moreover, there was that great body of loyalists, who, during the seven years since the British first entered New York, had found

refuge from their countrymen within the English lines. It is not easy, perhaps it is impossible, to reckon with any accuracy the numbers involved in the impending exodus; but it can scarcely have been much less than fifty thousand souls; it may have been more. This was no small thing. For the evacuation of New York was no mere transfer of an armed post from one power to another; it was the last act in the break-up of a whole society, deep-rooted in the past, and more than fearful of the future.

It was the more impressive in that the city of New York was then scarcely more than a great village, which, in its most prosperous days before the war, had numbered hardly more than twenty thousand souls, and owing to the two fires which had occurred since the British occupation, had lost a considerable number of its original dwellings. Their places were ill-supplied by the huts and tents which sheltered some thousands of the refugee loyalists, who, with the soldiers and the original inhabitants, made up the heterogeneous population of the town on the eve of its evacuation. They were in evil plight. Hemmed in by land, and accessible by sea only to British vessels or those which risked the embargo laid by the neighboring states against this British capital, the price of provisions increased, it was declared, eight hundred per cent by the blockade. The position of these people was melancholy in the extreme. Beggars and thieves vied with each other in numbers and assurance. The jails were full, but not so full, if we are to believe contemporary accounts, as they should have been had all lawbreakers been in custody. The harbor was crowded with transports and men-of-war and hulks filled with American prisoners. Churches and public buildings had been largely converted to military

uses; the houses of patriot refugees occupied by British officers or loyalist fugitives. The town was under military control; and though it lacked the horrors of a regular siege, the social brilliance which had marked the earlier years of British occupation had all but disappeared under the increasing pressure and misfortunes of the long enduring war.

Such was the scene of the final episode of the American Revolution in the seaboard colonies, when in May, 1782, Sir Guy Carleton came to succeed Sir Henry Clinton as general-in-chief of all His British Majesty's forces in America, and Commissioner for Peace. The new commander was a bright spot in a dark picture. He had behind him an honorable and a successful career. Entering the army as a mere boy, according to the custom of the time, he had seen hard service and risen by merit through successive stages to the rank of major-general. During the Seven Years' War he had fought at Louisburg and Quebec, Belleisle and Havana, beside many of the officers of Washington's army to whom he was now opposed. He had long been the ruler of Canada, and had done much to preserve that province to Great Britain; first by furthering the passage of the Quebec Act, which had helped to reconcile the conquered French to British rule; later by his defense of Quebec against the expedition of Arnold and Montgomery; and finally by an administration acceptable to English and French alike, which had kept the province quiet and loyal through the stress of the American Revolution. His courage and his ability, his "humane conduct and common-sense," had won for him not only the respect and confidence of those he ruled; but, what was more difficult, the regard of his superiors in England; and, most difficult of all, even that of his enemies. His appearance and

address, so strikingly like that of Washington as to cause comment even when they met face to face, commanded the admiration of all with whom he came in contact. Such was the man who came to this disturbed city on his thankless errand in this spring of 1782.

To him the Rockingham administration had entrusted not only the difficult task of commanding in America, but the impossible commission of holding the colonies, if possible, to their old allegiance. His instructions were, in themselves, simple. He was directed to avoid hostilities, except in defense; to withdraw the garrisons from Savannah, Charleston, and New York, with their dependencies; and "to use every means of reconciling the minds and affections of His Majesty's North American subjects by such open and generous conduct as may serve to captivate their hearts and remove every suspicion of insincerity"; to make use of "every circumstance which can tend to revive old affections or extinguish late jealousies." For even in this last extremity there were many Englishmen who not only wished but even hoped to save America on any terms; and for this purpose no instrument was more suitable than the brave, generous, capable and sincere public servant, Sir Guy Carleton.

It was too late. Had Carleton been in the place of Gage, or Howe, even of Clinton, in the preceding years, the history of the American Revolution might have been a very different story. But events had moved beyond the possibility of compromise before he appeared upon the scene. It was in vain that he tried to open a correspondence with Washington as soon as he arrived. It was in vain that he forwarded a proposal of the House of Commons to conclude a peace by a mixed commission. It was in vain that he wrote to the

governors of the states, appealed to the people through the press, and made himself agreeable to influential individuals. There were, indeed, some meetings held in New England in favor of immediate peace. The army grew increasingly dissatisfied with its treatment. But Washington refused to correspond on other than military matters; and Congress, making its consideration of a treaty dependent on recognition of independence or the withdrawal of the British forces, mindful of the position which it had attained abroad, left the negotiations for the peace in the hands of Franklin, Adams, Laurens and Jay, their representatives in Paris, where the final determination of the event rested.

Meanwhile the war went on. Rodney defeated the French in the West Indies; along the western border the Canadian governor, Haldimand, continued hostilities; and the Americans projected an attack on Fort Oswego. To prevent the British from leaving New York for the West Indies, or on another campaign in the colonies, the French and American armies marched north and joined forces on the Hudson. Of the latter contingency there was no danger; England was bent on peace; and, on the arrival of news of the beginning of negotiations in Paris, some fruitless attempts were made toward the exchange of prisoners. So passed the summer of 1782. With the departure of the British from Charleston in October, the French began a movement which took them to Boston and so to the West Indies; and the British and the Americans were left face to face.

As these readjustments of the troops took place, preliminary articles of peace were signed at Paris between the representatives of Great Britain and the United States. Before the end of the year the British forces had all been trans-

ferred from the south. Before the end of January, 1783, hostilities had ceased; and Great Britain, France, Spain and the United States had framed articles of general pacification. There remained to Carleton, therefore, nothing of his position and instructions but the expedition of the departure of the British forces from their last foothold in New York; and to this task, while Washington and Clinton busied themselves in an excursion to view the waterways of New York and Pennsylvania, the British commander addressed himself.

It was no easy task, and it was complicated by a variety of perplexing conditions and circumstances, among which the problem of the loyalists was not the least. On the twenty-third of March, 1783, there arrived at Philadelphia a French vessel, *La Triomphe,* sent out by d'Estaing to recall the French cruisers, bearing the news of a general peace. Carleton was at once notified, and, though he courteously acknowledged the information, and only awaited, as he said, "official certainty of this great event to assume the language and the spirit, too, of most perfect conciliation and peace," he felt constrained to postpone the release of prisoners until he should receive "the very welcome and necessary notice" of the treaty, on the arrival of which he would "find the highest satisfaction in seeing released on all sides men upon whom the evils and calamities of war have more peculiarly fallen." Meanwhile he took steps to facilitate the impending embarkation by clearing the docks and wharves for action, and making preparations in the harbor to handle the increase of shipping.

A little less than two weeks later, on April 6, a British packet, the *Prince William Henry,* from Falmouth, reached

New York, bearing the royal proclamation of February 14, declaring cessation of hostilities; and three days later this proclamation was read by the Town Mayor at the City Hall. Carleton at once notified Washington of its arrival. Congress issued a proclamation in accordance with the terms of the treaty, and communicated it to the British commander; and each side began to take steps to carry out its share of the arrangements for the peace.

The earliest of these were the release and the exchange of prisoners. From Frederickton and Winchester, where some fifteen hundred British were interned, from Philadelphia, and from a score of scattered posts beside, the British took up their journey to New York. At the same time from the jails and barracks and prison-hulks of that city, the Americans were released, and began to find their way back to their homes. Of the two the English and Hessians were in better case. They were assured of some provision for their maintenance; they were permitted, even urged, to settle among their late enemies, who were even then endeavoring to make the life of their loyalist neighbors difficult or unendurable; and no small number of these troops took advantage of this opportunity to find homes in the land they had so recently sought to conquer. Some of the Americans were equally fortunate. Many were not; and among the driftwood of the past which has floated down to us, is the story of one of these American prisoners which serves to illustrate at once the situation in which probably no small number of such unfortunates found themselves on the conclusion of the war, and the spirit which made them and their country what they were. It is the brief narrative of a certain Elijah Fisher, who, on April 9, 1783, was discharged, as he relates, from the "old Jarsey prison-ship."

For a week he knocked about New York. Then, on the 16th, as he writes:

"I com down by the markett and sits Down all alone, allmost Descouraged, and begun to think over how that I had ben in the army, what ill success I had met with there and all so how I was ronged by them I worked for at home, and lost all last winter, and now that I could not get into any besness and no home, which you may well think how I felt; but then Come into my mind that there ware thousands in worse circumstances then I was, and having food and rament (I ought to) be content, and that I had nothing to reflect on myself, and I (resolved) to do my endever and leave the avent to Provedance, and after that I felt as contented as need be."

With this comforting reflection, he begged his way through the taverns to Boston, and so out of history, being protected, one may hope, by that same Providence, however spelled, in which he put his faith.

But if his case was hard, what was to be said of the loyalists? Whatever the effect on the adherents of the patriot cause who heard the proclamation of the approaching peace read from the balcony of the old City Hall, there was no doubt of its effect on those who had remained faithful to the mother-country. To them it was not merely the death-knell of their cause, but, as many of them knew only too well, of their lives in their old homes. Anticipating this result, some six hundred of them, it was reported, had sailed for Nova Scotia in the preceding autumn. It scarcely needed the letter of Washington declaring that those of them who had served the Crown in the late war could not return to their old homes without the consent of the state authorities, to

make them realize the position in which they now found themselves.

In this desperate situation they appealed to Carleton and through him to the Crown to aid them; and every motive of justice and expediency combined to urge the British authorities to give them all assistance possible. A Parliamentary commission was appointed to consider the problem, and pass upon their claims; a sum of three million pounds was voted for their relief. Great tracts of land in Nova Scotia and upper Canada were set aside for them; the proprietors of St. John's offered a quarter of their lands to intending settlers; and in no long time about Port Roseway rose the city of Shelburne in Nova Scotia; about Fort Frontenac in Ontario, the city of Kingston; and farther west that of Toronto. In course of a few years two new provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick, were set apart from the older divisions of British territory north of the United States, in which this body of emigrant exiles—United Empire Loyalists as they came to call themselves—were the commanding element. Thus from the collapse of British power in the United States, and the calamities of those who had remained loyal to that power, began the development of the waste spaces of a new empire.

Meanwhile Carleton began the reduction of the army to a peace establishment, and the despatch of troops to their European homes, or to the other British possessions beyond seas. In general the regiments were put on a footing of about four hundred privates each. The American loyalist forces were to be disbanded in Nova Scotia, together with certain British contingents. The rest were reduced or disbanded in New York; and in this manner some thousands

were got rid of before the evacuation proper; and Staten Island, in particular, where most of this force had been stationed, was an extremely busy place in that spring and summer of 1783.

With that began the transfer of the rest. As early as April the exodus commenced with the sailing of the spring fleet to Nova Scotia; and every dock was crowded with refugees and their belongings. The first voyage of the transports carried a number variously estimated at from five to nine thousand, Carleton's figures being midway between these two extremes, and probably approximately correct. May saw the departure of six thousand more, and June a like number. Thenceforward every week's newspaper chronicles the emigrants by hundreds and thousands. It was said in early September that eight thousand had just left, and that there were some twelve or fourteen thousand still to go. The most, it would appear, went by sea to Nova Scotia, or to what is now New Brunswick; but many went by land to Montreal or points further west along the St. Lawrence and the lakes to what is now Ontario. These latter were for the time being chiefly from the country districts and were later joined by many who had gone the longer way by water.

By November 1783 nearly all who could had left. Though Canada and Nova Scotia had received the most, many went to the West Indies; some of the more well-to-do to England; and by the end of the year the United States was the poorer by many thousands of what had been its wealthiest and most cultured, if not its most democratic and progressive, element. Yet many remained; and of these, in the course of years, no small number rose to distinction even in politics, many more in commerce and finance and in profes-

sional life. It is an interesting consideration how this great emigration of the loyalists affected the future of the land which they were forced to leave. For New York was not alone. Boston had been earlier purged in like fashion; many had gone from other parts of New England; Philadelphia had lost its thousands by the withdrawal of Howe. From Virginia and the south in general, from Savannah and Charleston in particular, had gone thousands more; and from New Hampshire to Florida the ports were crowded with these refugees.

New York remained, however, the principal centre of this activity, for thither had come many from other parts hoping for protection and some turn of the tide which might restore them to their homes and property; so that among these thousands a considerable proportion were not natives of the city or province which had sheltered them. But they increased the great confusion and the crowd; and as this busy summer of 1783 went on, to their departure was joined that of the troops, till one wonders at Carleton's capacity to handle the situation. In May the Guards, Cornwallis's and Burgoyne's men, and the Hessians, such as had not elected to remain, were reported to have begun the voyage to England. By the end of August it would appear that all the foreign troops which had not been disbanded, or who had not deserted, were on their way home. With them went the English. Ship after ship, laden with troops, officers, and material, is noted as leaving New York or arriving in England. Late in July eight hundred men were sent to Bermuda for garrison duty; and early September saw the guns and ammunition despatched, chiefly to the West Indies. No small part of the troops were ordered out almost at once from

England to India, where the British were at war with Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore. There the administration of Warren Hastings was just coming to an end; and there, within three years, Lord Cornwallis began to retrieve the reputation injured in America, supported by many of the men who had gone down with him to defeat in the war just done.

With all this movement of soldiers and civilians during this summer of 1783, New York harbor rose to heights of activity which it had never experienced before and was not to see again for many years. Fleets of transports poured in from every Atlantic port. Twelve thousand tons of shipping arrived in September—and this was a great matter in a day when a vessel of four hundred tons burden was reckoned not inconsiderable. Thirty-seven transports from Jamaica preceded this armada; and every American port was scoured for vessels. Private owners reaped a rich harvest, from government as well as individuals; and though the forts still carried the British ensign, the American flag was seen on many ships. Every issue of a New York paper carried notices relating to the embarkation during the summer; and they are not without interest as showing something of the great movement.

"Notice to Refugees. The following transports . . . will certainly fall down on Monday morning; it will therefore be absolutely necessary for the people who are appointed to go in these companies to be all aboard To-Morrow Evening.

"Saturday last his Majesty's ship *Magicienne* . . . arrived here from Jamaica after a tedious passage of nine weeks with transports under convoy.

"The Loyalists engaged with John Van Norden to go to

Port Roseway are directed to have their baggage ready for embarkation at the Fly-Market by nine o'clock this morning; they are also requested to assemble at his lodgings No. 411 Murray's Street, about Six o'clock in the evening.

"All Loyalists intending for Glasgow are desired to meet at No. 33 in Gold Street on Friday at Four o'clock in the Afternoon.

"All Loyalists for Scotland or Ireland are requested to meet at Mr. Thomas Ming's No. 6 Water Street at Four o'clock this afternoon.

"Notice is hereby given to all Loyalists within the Lines, desirous to emigrate from this place before the final Evacuation that they must give in their names at the Adjutant-General's Office on or before the 21st instant, and be ready to embark by the end of this month."

It was inevitable that this sudden and forced emigration should be accompanied not only by the hurrying to and fro of the multitude seeking to escape, by the constant passing of troops, and the hundred signs of sorrow and distress which always mark such a scene; but by a transfer of property such as New York had never seen before, and few cities have ever experienced. Naturally every refugee wished to turn his possessions into their smallest portable form; and the army was forced to dispose of its surplus material in as short a time as possible. The result was a multitude of auctions which would have gladdened the heart of the most hardened of bargain-hunters. Every street, almost every block, witnessed this rapid and unbusinesslike form of exchange daily. The army administration advertised and held its periodical sales of cattle and wagons, its wood, and its surplus stores. The thoroughfares were crowded with goods of every description, vehicles, horses, stocks of merchandise,

furniture, even books, pictures and clothes; and this whole summer of 1783 was transformed into one vast moving-day, with all of the turmoil and upheaval which such a time implies. Meanwhile the public buildings—the churches in particular—were purged of their occupants and set in order for their proper use, to which many of them had long been unaccustomed.

By this the more thrifty patriots profited; and many of them recouped the losses which they had suffered seven years before, when they had fled before the coming of the British. Had the property which thus changed hands gone back in every case to the possession of its original owners; had the losers by that early migration, even, been the ones who benefited by this overthrow of their enemies, the result might have been, if not a general satisfaction among those who now began to come again into their ancient inheritance, at least a fair redistribution of the spoils. But that was far from being the case; and amid this turmoil rose not only the bitter cry of the fleeing loyalists, but the complaints of the less enterprising or more scrupulous patriots, who saw the last hope of compensation for their losses vanish before their eyes. Those complaints were innumerable, that denunciation bitter; and if anything were needed to make impossible the situation of those loyalists who hoped to remain, the clamor of the righteously or unrighteously indignant patriots supplied the threat which made departure not only advisable but necessary. What happened when those who had left the city years before and came back to find much of their property in the hands not of their enemies, but of their neighbors, we are not properly informed, but their feelings are not difficult to imagine.

On no question was there more complaint than on that of

negro slaves; and it is one of the ironies of history that the Americans who had fought for liberty were the loudest in their demands that the negroes who found shelter within the British lines should be returned to slavery; and that the forces which had fought against American liberty should be the power to which these negroes looked for freedom. Not the least interesting of the little episodes which have been preserved from this period for our edification, is the story of a man who came down to New York with a slave who refused to go back with him, and when taken by force was rescued from his master by a detachment of Hessians.

No mortal man could have avoided an infinity of disputes and dissatisfaction in such a chaos; but what man could do to mitigate the worst of its evils, Carleton did. One of his first steps was to join with the American authorities in appointing a joint commission to supervise the embarkations, and ensure, in so far as possible, that no goods or chattels were carried off from their lawful owners either by the refugees or by other even less scrupulous individuals—and the busiest men in New York were those appointed to carry out this task! Notices were issued that all claims upon the British government would be duly met by the proper authorities; and the commander-in-chief even issued an order which gives some light upon his character as well as the circumstances in which he found himself, that all officers must meet their obligations before embarking. To this was added a proclamation against the destruction or the injury of any building, even by the proprietor, without permission of the Board of Commissioners appointed to oversee the adjustment and settlement of all accounts and debts.

Meanwhile Carleton put himself in touch with Washing-

ton, who began to take his share in the event, while the British commander toiled with all his own energy and power and those of his subordinates to bring order out of chaos; to maintain the civil peace; to embark those committed to his care; and to preserve not only the goods but the good-will of the Americans. Little by little as the summer went on he had the satisfaction of seeing his task take form and bring results. From the time of his meeting with Washington at Tappan in May—at a modest entertainment which cost five hundred pounds—to the day when he was able to notify Washington of his purpose to withdraw on November 25, his efforts were unremitting to make the departure of the British worthy of their own best traditions of justice, honor and courtesy; and, though there were few untoward circumstances in their occupation of the city, nothing so became them as their leaving it.

On the 19th of November Carleton wrote to Washington that "His Majesty's troops will retire from Kingsbridge and McGowan's Pass on this Island on the 21st instant, as notified to your Excellency in my letter of the 12th; and I shall resign the possession of Herrick's and Hempstead, with all to the eastward on Long Island, the same day. Paulus Hook will be relinquished on the day following; but, though every exertion has been made with a view to evacuate this city at the same time which it was my hope and intention to do, I now find it impossible. Yet, notwithstanding the winds have been lately very unfavorable, if I have proper assurances that we shall retain a free and uninterrupted use of the Ship-Yard and Hallett's Wharf in New York and the Brewery and Bake-House on Long Island (which the admiral represents as indispensably necessary for the shipping

and sick seamen) until we can be ready to take our final departure, I shall retire from this city and from Brooklyn on Tuesday next at noon, or as soon after as wind and weather may permit; only retaining (in addition to the reservation above specified) Staten Island, with Dennis's, New Utrecht, and the circumjacent district, for such time as may be found absolutely requisite for the troops that may then remain unprovided with transports.

"I have received repeated information, the substance of which I enclose, that a deliberate combination has been formed to plunder this town whenever the King's troops shall be withdrawn; and, as I doubt not that your Excellency is, with me, desirous to prevent every species of enormity on this interesting occasion, I give you this intimation, which I have reason to think is well founded, and shall endeavor to persuade the informant to wait on you in person, which he seems not averse to, though greatly apprehensive of the resentment of those concerning whom he has given information."

Upon this, after so long a period of preparation, the action developed rapidly. The day after the receipt of Carleton's letter, a meeting was held at Cape's Tavern to prepare for the entry of the American forces, with General Washington and Governor Clinton. Citizens wearing a "Union" cockade of black and white ribbons on the left breast and a sprig of laurel in their hats, were to meet at the Bull's Head Tavern, where they would form a square about the General and the Governor, with the officers of the army on the flanks; and so conduct their excellencies into the city. Two days later Washington, then at Harlem, replying to Carle-

ton, referred him to Clinton for arrangements for the evacuation, and assured him that his fears of a combination to plunder seemed to be unfounded. To this, on the 24th Carleton replied that on the following day he would withdraw about noon; and that he trusted the American troops would be near the barrier that he might notify them of the departure of the British.

Immediately the Citizens' Committee issued notice that the American troops under General Knox would take possession; and as soon as that was done, the citizens on horseback would proceed from the Bowling Green to meet the General and the Governor at the Bull's Head Tavern, those on foot at the Tea Water Pump. Despite Washington's doubts of the correctness of Carleton's information regarding a possible outbreak of mob violence and plundering, the citizens took the precaution of establishing patrols and guards to protect the city during the night before evacuation.

Thus was the stage set for what the English commander had called the "interesting occasion"; and it can hardly be doubted that the greater part of the inhabitants of New York went to bed on the eve of that event in a state of mind which brought them to an even earlier rising than was their custom in those simpler days. As it happened the weather was peculiarly favorable. The morning of the 25th was clear and brilliant, if cold. The streets were crowded with holiday-makers; and the troops on both sides were promptly at their respective posts. By eight o'clock the American forces, with the light infantry as the main-guard, had reached the barrier near McGowan's Pass, where they were so close to the British rear-guard that General Knox and his staff talked

with the British officers with every appearance of good-feeling, even cordiality.

Thus matters stood until one o'clock. Then the British main body began their march; and, passing along the Bowery to Chatham Street, and so to Pearl, turned off to the river and embarked. Closely following them came the Americans, a corps of dragoons, and one of artillery, some battalions of light infantry, and a rear-guard under Knox, who was chosen for that service, it would appear, because of his size and fine appearance. Down the Bowery to Chatham, thence through Pearl Street, they followed their late antagonists; but at Wall Street their paths diverged. The Americans marched along Wall Street to Broadway and so to Cape's Tavern, where the main body halted, while a detail of infantry and artillery proceeded to Fort George, accompanied by a curious crowd, eager to see the final act in the drama.

That act, as it proved, was in the nature not of heroic episode, but of comedy. But before it was staged, General Knox, at the head of the body of mounted citizens who had been collected at Bowling Green, rode out the Bowery to meet Washington and Clinton, who, with their escort, had meanwhile ridden in from Harlem to the Bull's Head Tavern. There, after the exchange of compliments and congratulations, the civic procession formed. At its head, escorted by a body of Westchester Light Horse, rode Washington and Clinton; then came the lieutenant-governor, van Cortlandt, with the members of the Council; then Knox and his officers, followed by the citizens on horseback; then the Speaker of the Assembly, with citizens on foot. Thus the procession made its way through the shouting crowds to the Tea

The Bull's Head Tavern, in the Bowery Between Bayard and Pump Streets.
From a lithograph by George Hayward, published in *Valentine's Manual* for 1861.

Water Pump. There it divided. Knox and his officers proceeded down Chatham Street past a body of British troops still drawn up in the Fields at City Hall Park; while Washington, Clinton and their followers made their way down Pearl Street to Wall, thence to Broadway, where they joined Knox; and, as the troops fired a salute, held a reception at Cape's Tavern, while the English provost and main-guards marched down to their boats and left the city at last in the hands of the Americans.

This done, the officers and citizens, forming a procession, marched to the Battery to take part in the final ceremony of the day, the raising of the American flag over Fort George; and there the comedy began. For the British, after dismantling the fort, carrying away all the material they could, and rendering the rest useless, had taken away the halyards and the blocks by which the flag was raised, and the pole climbed. To crown the injury, some humorous member of the departing troops had greased the staff. Thus when the Americans reached the scene of their final triumph, they found the soldiers drawn up, the artillery unlimbered for a salute, and everything ready—except the flagstaff. Every effort to climb it proved fruitless. At last a sailor, aided by men who brought him a ladder, cleats, hammer and nails, climbed up the ladder as far as he could go, nailed the cleats on one by one, made his way to the top of the staff, removed the British ensign which still floated there, and secured new blocks and tackle. Then, as the halyards were reeved, and the American flag was run up, the guns boomed forth the first salute to the flag of the United States in New York harbor; and the remaining British, who had rested on their oars, to watch this by-play, rowed in silence to their ships.

That night Governor Clinton gave a great dinner in Fraunces' Tavern, at which Washington and many of his officers were guests. At that feast thirteen toasts were drunk, beginning with the United States of America, and ending with one of those "sentiments" to which the eighteenth century was so partial—"May the Remembrance of *This Day* be a Lesson to Princes"; and including another, "May America be an asylum to the Persecuted of the Earth," which, among them all, seems to have been realized with some results which could hardly have been foreseen even by those enthusiastic gentlemen. With this, New York was given over to a season of rejoicing. For days the taverns resounded with the noise of festivity. Cape entertained three hundred on the 28th, and a hundred more in honor of the French Ambassador four days later; and that dinner was followed by a display of fireworks on the Bowling Green which surpassed anything of the kind New York had ever seen before.

Two days later, on Thursday the fourth of December, the Long Room of Fraunces' Tavern saw the final episode of New York's share in this great event. Here Washington took leave of those officers of his army who still remained in the city. It was an affecting scene. One after another those who had served under him came forward to grasp his hand; one by one he kissed them; and they left with his last words ringing in their ears; "With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you; I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." Thence, followed by his companions in arms, he passed through a corps of light infantry to the Whitehall Ferry. There he entered his barge, waved his hat in answer to the farewells

from shore, and so left the scene of his last military triumph, which, when he visited it again, was to witness his inauguration as President of the United States which his genius and character had made possible.

On that same day the British left Long Island and Staten Island where the remnant of their forces had been awaiting transportation. Their flag on Governors Island had been lowered only the day before; and at the same moment that Washington was taking leave of his officers, the British frigate *Ceres,* bearing Sir Guy Carleton and his staff, with the ships carrying the last of his command capable of being transported, weighed anchor and dropped down the Bay on their way to England.

It is a common device of a certain school of historical writers to entertain themselves, and perhaps their readers, by imagining what thoughts filled the minds of the actors in a great historic drama such as this. It is a harmless pastime of no serious consequences, in which it is scarcely necessary to indulge here. There are many reflections which such a scene inspires, and it is not easy to choose among them those best fitted to the occasion. Yet two utterances, a hundred years apart, by men still further removed from each other than even that period might signify, may well be adduced to sum up what many men of many minds have thought then and since of this great revolution which separated the two chief branches of the Anglo-Saxon race.

"It having pleased divine Providence to dispose the hearts of the most serene and most potent Prince George III, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg, arch-treasurer and Prince Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, *etc.,* and of the

United States of America, to forget all past misunderstandings and differences that have unhappily interrupted the good correspondence and friendship which they mutually desire to restore, and to establish such a beneficial and satisfactory intercourse between the two countries upon the ground of reciprocal advantages and mutual convenience as may promote and secure both perpetual peace and harmony . . .", they do and hereby declare that they make peace on the following terms.

So runs the preamble to that momentous document which finally brought to an end the controversy between the two great branches of the English-speaking race signed at Paris on September 3, 1783. It breathes the spirit of a world as far from us as that of the Cæsars, and the language of a diplomacy long since vanished from the earth. The Holy Roman Empire is no more; its pomp of title, like its empty pretense of power, passed away forever in the storm of Napoleonic conquest. The kings of England are no longer Dukes of Brunswick or of Lüneburg; they no longer assert their futile claim to a throne of France, which is itself now no longer existent. The faith which they defend is no longer that which brought that outworn designation to their predecessors; not even, perhaps, quite that which George the Third professed.

Yet antiquated as the phraseology may be, absurd as the description of the events here chronicled as "misunderstandings and differences that have unhappily interrupted the good correspondence and friendship" of England and America may seem, something remains of the spirit which that already ancient treaty breathes. The cause of Washington triumphed over that of George III not only in America

BY THE KING.

A PROCLAMATION,

Declaring the Ceſſation of Arms, as well by Sea as Land, agreed upon between His Majeſty, the Moſt Chriſtian King, the King of *Spain*, the States General of the *United Provinces*, and the United States of *America*, and enjoining the Obſervance thereof.

GEORGE *R.*

WHEREAS Proviſional Articles were ſigned at *Paris*, on the Thirtieth Day of *November* laſt, between Our Commiſſioner for treating of Peace with the Commiſſioners of the United States of *America*, and the Commiſſioners of the ſaid States, to be inſerted in and to conſtitute the Treaty of Peace propoſed to be concluded between Us and the ſaid United States, when Terms of Peace ſhould be agreed upon between Us and His Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty: And whereas Preliminaries for reſtoring Peace between Us and His Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, were ſigned at *Verſailles* on the Twentieth Day of *January* laſt, by the Miniſters of Us and the Moſt Chriſtian King. And whereas Preliminaries for reſtoring Peace between Us and the King of *Spain*, were alſo ſigned at *Verſailles*, on the Twentieth Day of *January* laſt, between the Miniſters of Us and the King of *Spain*: And whereas, for putting an End to the Calamity of War as ſoon and as far as may be poſſible, it hath been agreed between Us, His Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, the King of *Spain*, the States-General of the *United Provinces*, and the United States of *America*, as follows; that is to ſay,

THAT ſuch Veſſels and Effects as ſhould be taken in the *Channel* and in the *North Seas*, after the Space of Twelve Days, to be computed from the Ratification of the ſaid Preliminary Articles, ſhould be reſtored on all Sides; That the Term ſhould be One Month from the *Channel* and the *North Seas* as far as the *Canary Iſlands* incluſively, whether in the Ocean or in the *Mediterranean*: Two Months from the ſaid *Canary Iſlands* as far as the Equinoctial Line or Equator; and laſtly, Five Months in all other Parts of the World, without any Exception, or any other more particular Deſcription of Time or Place.

AND whereas the Ratifications of the ſaid Preliminary Articles between Us and the Moſt Chriſtian King, in due Form, were exchanged by the Miniſters of Us and of the Moſt Chriſtian King, on the Third Day of this inſtant *February*; and the Ratifications of the ſaid Preliminary Articles between Us and the King of *Spain*, were exchanged between the Miniſters of Us and of the King of *Spain*, on the Ninth Day of this inſtant *February*; from which Days reſpectively the ſeveral Terms above-mentioned, of Twelve Days, of One Month, of Two Months, and of Five Months, are to be computed: And whereas it is Our Royal Will and Pleaſure that the Ceſſation of Hoſtilities between Us and the States General of the *United Provinces*, and the United States of *America*, ſhould be agreeable to the Epochs fixed between Us and the Moſt Chriſtian King:

WE have thought fit, by and with the Advice of Our Privy Council, to notify the ſame to all Our loving Subjects; and We do declare, that Our Royal Will and Pleaſure is, and we do hereby ſtrictly charge and command all Our Officers, both at Sea and Land, and all other Our Subjects whatſoever, to forbear all Acts of Hoſtility, either by Sea or Land, againſt His Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, the King of *Spain*, the States General of the *United Provinces*, and the United States of *America*, their Vaſſals or Subjects, from and after the reſpective Times above-mentioned, and under the Penalty of incurring Our higheſt Diſpleaſure.

Given at Our Court at St. James's, *the Fourteenth Day of* February, *in the Twenty-third Year of Our Reign, and in the Year of Our Lord One Thouſand, Seven Hundred and Eighty-three.*

GOD ſave the KING.

LONDON: Printed by CHARLES EYRE and WILLIAM STRAHAN, Printers to the KING's Moſt Excellent Majeſty. 1783.

NEW-YORK: Re-printed by JAMES RIVINGTON, Printer to the KING's Moſt Excellent Majeſty. 1783.

THE PROCLAMATION OF GEORGE III DECLARING THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 14, 1783.

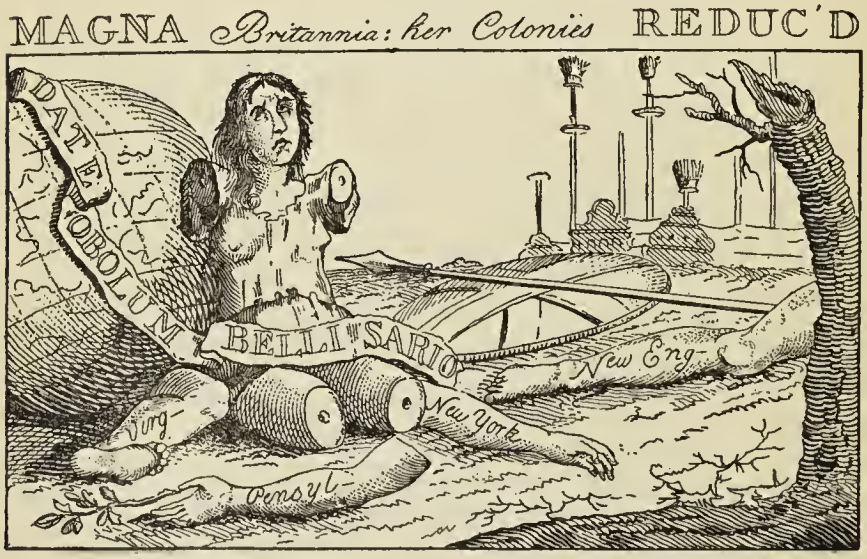
From the original broadside in the New York Public Library.

but in England; and as it conquered, it may be more generous.

"To all true men," said Phillips Brooks in his famous Fourth of July Sermon, preached in Westminster Abbey just a hundred years after the eventful summer of the evacuation of New York, "the birthday of a nation must always be a sacred thing. For . . . the nation is the making-place of men . . . and if she sees a hope and promise that God means to build in this new land some strong and free and characteristic manhood which shall help the world to completeness, the mother-land will surely lose the thought and memory of whatever anguish accompanied the birth, for gratitude over the gain which humanity has made, 'for joy that a man is born into the world.' "

The evacuation of New York was the last of those birth-pangs of this nation of which we are a part. Since its humble beginnings the world has changed, and no part of it more than that great city. To this altered nation we may echo his eloquent words; "on the manifold and wondrous chance which God is giving her—on her freedom; on her unconstrained religious life; on her passion for education and her eager search for truth; on her jealous care for the poor man's rights and opportunities; on her countless quiet homes where the future generations of her men are growing; on her manufactures and her commerce; on her wide gates open to the east and to the west; on her strange meetings of the races out of which a new race is slowly being born; on her vast enterprise and illimitable hopefulness—on all these materials and machineries of manhood, on all that the life of my country means for humanity, I may ask you to pray for the blessing of God."

For this, if it stands for anything worth while, such an event as the American reoccupation of New York must stand: and its evacuation remains the symbol of the triumph of the principles of those men who marched down its streets on that November day in 1783; and which it is our hard task to defend and to preserve against less open enemies than theirs. In that great task we may be heartened by the words of Washington in this great and memorable scene: "That your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution which is the work of your hands may be sacredly maintained; that its administration may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States under the auspices of liberty may be made complete—this is my unceasing prayer to Heaven."



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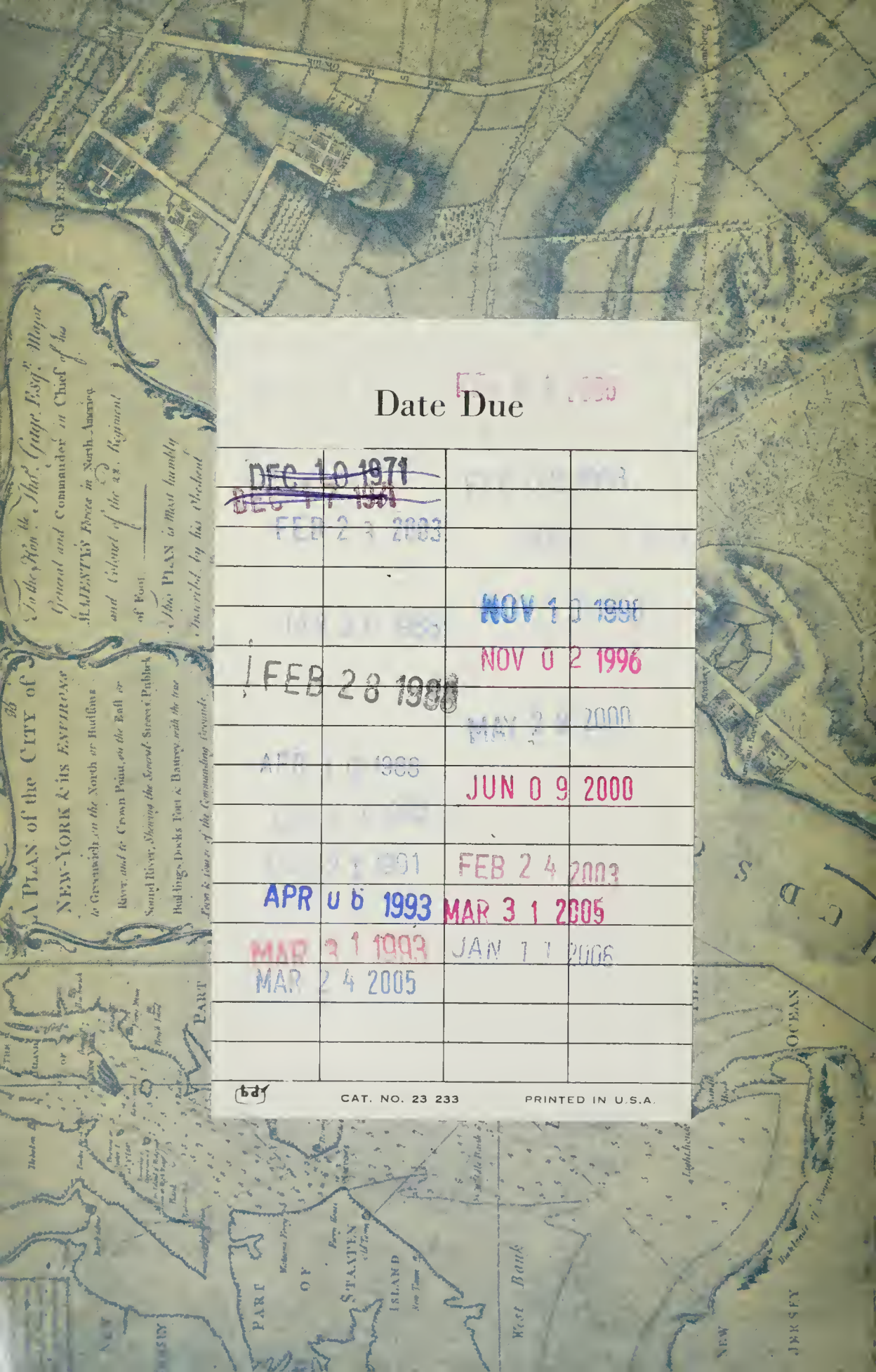
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